

The Architecture of Sir Ernest George and
His Partners. C.1860-1922

Volume I

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Ph.D.

The University of Leeds
Department of Fine Art
January 1985

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the architectural work of Sir Ernest George and his partners from c.1860 to 1922. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to George's early life, pupillage and training, the partnership with Thomas Vaughan and the establishment and consolidation of practice. George and Vaughan's first country house commission, Rousdon, Devon and associated works for Sir Henry Peek are considered in detail. Chapter 2 examines the Peto family and its associations, noting influences on George through his partnership with Harold Ainsworth Peto. Reference is made to the effects of the Petos on the pattern of patronage of the firm. George's early work in the Queen Anne style is introduced through an examination of the circumstances surrounding his commission for premises for Messrs Thomas Goode and Company, London; associations with the Temperance Movement, and the work for the 4th Earl of Onslow in Surrey are also considered. Chapter 3 investigates the firm's connections with Peto Brothers, Builders, and their subsequent collaborative work at Harrington and Collingham Gardens in Kensington, London. In Chapter 4, George and Peto's work during the period from 1882 to 1892 is examined; works executed in terra-cotta are grouped together, as are works for new and established clients, commissions abroad and London work. In Chapter 5, six country houses which can readily be used to illustrate particular aspects of George and Peto's work have been singled out for investigation. Chapter 6 deals with George's work executed with his third partner, Alfred Yeates. Both their domestic and general work is examined against the background of stylistic debate and change. Chapter 7 provides six case studies of country houses by George and Yeates which serve to illustrate different aspects of their practice, and stylistic vocabulary. Chapter 8 examines George and Yeates's competition entries and two major commissions, for Golders Green Crematorium, London and Southwark Bridge, London. Chapter 9 discusses the office of Sir Ernest George from c.1860 to 1920, describing office practice, and giving an account of George's pupils and assistants. Chapter 10 examines George's contributions to public and professional life, provides a resumé of biography and a conclusion. The catalogue gives detailed references to all the works identified as being executed by Sir Ernest George and his partners between c.1860 and 1922.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the help I have received with my research and express my thanks to,

the following staff from the Department of Fine Art, The University of Leeds,

my supervisor, Stephen Chaplin for his continued help and support, Anthony Hughes and late Professor Arnold Noach;

the following staff of Archives, Art Galleries, Libraries and Museums,

Adrian A. Allan, M.Y.Ashcroft, Miss G.M.A.Beck, Miss P.L.Bell, Michael Bott, Dennis Bricknell, R.Brocklesby, Miss M.E.Cash, Mrs Brenda R.Cluer, Ivor P.Collis, R.N.E.Dawe, A.A.Dibben, K.A.Doughty, Dr J.A. Edwards, D.V.Fowkes, Mrs D.J.R.Garrett, Mrs P.Gill, Miss M.Gollanz, Miss A.Green, Susanna Guy, Miss Jean D.Hamilton, Miss M.J.Harrington, Mary C.Hill, Jennifer Hoffmann, Miss M.E.Holmes, K.D.Holt, Felix Hull, M.Johnson, Ruth Kamen, Miss Jean M.Kennedy, P.A.Kennedy, P.I.King, D.M.Laverick, William R.Maidment, Miss M.Meaden, James O'Donnell, Mrs M.D.Penycate, J.A.Potter, Maurice G.Rathbone, J.Gordon Read, Brian C.Redwood, Dr D.B.Robinson, K.H.Rogers, Mrs M.M.Rowe, E.H.Sargeant, Derek M.M.Shorrocks, Miss Joan Sinar, Brian S.Smith, D.J.H.Smith, Janet Smith, W.J.Smith, M.K.Stammers, Sheila M.Stirling, Miss M.S.Travis, Peter Walne, Mrs M.A.Walsh, Miss M.Y.Williams, Miss S.Woods, W.N.Yates;

the following private individuals who have generously given access to unpublished material,

Lord Crathorne (Dugdale family papers); Robert Hanbury, (Robert and Amy Hanbury's diaries and Hanbury family papers); Michael M.Mason (Mason family papers) and to Major Sir Torquhil and Lady Serena Matheson not only for providing access to diaries by Harold A.Peto and Basil E.Peto, and Peto family papers, but also for their continued help and support;

the following individuals who have helped in numerous and various ways,

Guy Aclogue, Dorothy Adams, Mrs A.Ament, J.P.K.Asquith, Sir Dawson Bates, Susan Beattie, Lord Berkeley, Michael Bizony, Brian Blackwood, Brian Bloice, Wilfred Blunt, W.A.G.Burns, Anthony J.Camp, Mrs P.Cannery, F.C.Carey, G.W.Carter, Revd Peter Cheesman, Bridget Cherry, Anne Clark, Hilda J.Clarke, Patricia Clarke, Colleagues from the Department of History of Art & Design and Complementary Studies, North Staffordshire Polytechnic, Anthony Congreve, W.O.Corbett, John Cox, Alan Crozier-Cole, Antony Dale, Daphne Denham, Mrs Diana Dent, Hilary M.Diaper, Mrs J.M.Dodd, Revd Frank Dosseter, James Dyer, C.V.W.de Falbe, Joan Farrer, Major E.H.C.Garnier, Geoffrey Godwin, Wendy Goffe, Harold Gough, Frederick V.Grainger, Revd M.S.Green, H.Hall, Helen Hamlyn, B.Lund Hanson, E.W.Hayden, Peter Herbert, B.J.C.Hesketh, G.E.Hewan, M.Heymann, Penelope Hobhouse, Peter Howell, M.W.N.Hughes-Hallett, John L.Hull, D.G.Jamieson, Sir Osbert Lancaster, Hugh Lea, Revd Christopher Leech, Jill Lever, Sylvia Lewis, C.J. Little, Christopher Main, Roy Maudesley, Dorothy I.Matthews, James McBean, Paul Miles, A.Mitchell, A.R.Mitchell, F.Nettleton, E.North, The Earl of Onslow, Daniel Palengat, Pamela, Countess of Onslow, Sir Francis Peek, Sir Christopher Peto, Sir Henry Peto, Richard de Pelet, Terence C.Piper, Revd R.B.Prater, Captain J.R. and Mrs H.Prescott, D.C.M.Prichard, Lord Redesdale, Sister Regina, Poles Convent, Hertfordshire, Mrs A.Joan Reid, Lord Reigate, Anne Riches, Lord Roborough, Dorothy Rockett, Mark A.Rogerson, M.Ruvigny, Ronald Ryle, Gillian L.Salway, Colin M.Simpson, Lord Stuart, Staff at Ripon Hall, Boar's Hill, Oxfordshire, Ernest Tew, A.Todd, Jean Tsuschima, N.Y.A.Wales, Sir Ian Walker-Okeover, J.N.P.Watson, Charles Watt, H.E.Wells-Furby, A.H.Westropp, T.J.Wormald, Mrs Doris Wye;

to the following Companies, Estate Offices, Institutions and Organisations,

The Alexander Estate, Artists' General Benevolent Institution, Associated Biscuits Ltd, The Bancroft Estate Agency Limited, Barling, The Batsford Estates Company, Bernard Thorpe and Partners, Cadogan Estates Ltd, Chamberlain & Willows, Clarges Fine Art, John D.Clarke & Son, Continental Bank, The Cremation Society of Great Britain,

Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Educational Trust, Manik Bagh, Indore, India, Doulton & Co.Ltd, Eaton Estate Record Office, The Edward James Foundation, W.A.Ellis, The Field, Francis Peek & Co.Ltd, Thomas Goode & Co., Glenlion Construction Ltd, The Greater London Council, Greater London Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service, The Grosvenor Estate Office, Hertfordshire Area Health Authority, The London Cremation Co.Ltd, Moss Elkin Ltd, The Post Office Fellowship of Remembrance Ltd, Royal Academy of Arts, Royal Institute of British Architects, Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours, Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, Scarisbrick & Bate Ltd, South London Art Gallery, Stanford Engineering Co., Tate & Lyle Ltd, Unilever Research, The Welbeck Estates Co.Ltd, Weller Eggar, W.D.& H.O.Wills, Winsor and Newton Ltd, John D.Wood & Co.;

Joyce Rathbone for her considerable help with the typing and presentation of this thesis;

David Heath and Ronald G.Viner for their substantial help with photography;

North Staffordshire Polytechnic, for financial support and the granting of Sabbatical leave;

Alan Crawford for his valuable help in reading and commenting upon the thesis in draft form;

Finally, to my second supervisor Andrew Saint for his continued help, support and unfailing encouragement at every stage throughout the writing of this thesis.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	<u>The Architect</u>
AA	<u>Academy Architecture</u>
A.A.	Architectural Association
AR	<u>Architectural Review</u>
B	<u>The Builder</u>
BA	<u>The British Architect</u>
BN	<u>Building News</u>
CEP	Crown Estate Papers
CPHN	<u>The Coffee Public-House News</u>
CL	<u>Country Life</u>
GLRO	The Greater London Record Office
LCC	London County Council
MBW	Metropolitan Board of Works
NRA	National Register of Archives
PRO	Public Record Office
RA	Royal Academy
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RIBAJ	Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects
V&A	Victoria & Albert Museum
ack:	acknowledgment due to
c:	cost
cat no:	catalogue number
cl:	client
ctr(s):	contractor(s)
c/w:	clerk of works
d:	date
desc:	description (of works in publications)
dr:	drawings
ill:	illustrated
Pl:	Plate
m:	materials
r:	references
st:	stone
drs:	dressings
t/h:	tile-hanging
½tmb:	half-timbering
vol(s):	volume(s)

PREFACE

Since the appearance of three articles in a series entitled, 'The Revival of English Domestic Architecture', by J.W.Gleeson-White in The Studio, in 1896,¹ no account of George's work has been published, nor has any complete catalogue of his architectural work been recorded. Furthermore, Gleeson-White's assessment examines the work of George in collaboration with Thomas Vaughan (1836-75), and Harold Ainsworth Peto (1854-1933), and only scant reference is made to work executed with his third partner, Alfred Bowman Yeates (1867-1944).²

Gleeson-White was well aware of the shortcomings of his evaluation:

'In writing of an artist of past times, it is possible to define his position and emphasise his peculiar individuality by comparing his work with that of his contemporaries. But for many reasons it would be infelicitous to attempt to do so with living men. Good taste forbids such a comparison being carried far enough to establish definitely the relative positions of each. Nor is it easy when the life work is still incomplete to appraise the ultimate position of his author'.³

The three articles by George followed two by the same author, which considered the work of Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912). This was thought appropriate because, claimed Gleeson-White,

'each is distinguished for his successful treatment of domestic architecture, each left the orthodox Gothic for styles derived chiefly from the Renaissance, and each has been responsible for a very large number of entirely satisfactory buildings'.⁴

This comparison with Shaw is of significance, since historically, it has been Shaw's work, rather than that of George, which has attracted critical attention. Sir Reginald Blomfield's biography of Shaw was published in 1940,⁵ Andrew Saint's in 1976.⁶ This critical imbalance has resulted in Shaw's work eclipsing that of George. Such a view was perhaps perpetuated by apocryphal stories such as that recalled by Harold Faulkner,

'There is a legend that Shaw had a letter printed: 'Mr Norman Shaw presents his compliments to Lord — and regrets that owing to pressure of work he is unable to accept his commission', the 'Lord' being cut out in most cases for the lesser 'Mister', and

that his pupils maliciously added 'but Mr Ernest George whose office is — will be very pleased to do so'. 7

But as Saint argues, 'Neither the snobbery nor the commendation lends the story authenticity'. 8

However, it is certainly the case that George was one of the most prolific and successful of late Victorian architects. His work enjoyed considerable contemporary acclaim from peers and critics alike. Herman Muthesius, the German commentator on the English Domestic Revival, drew attention to George's work in his important and influential Das Englische Haus 9 and Die Englische Baukunst Der Gegenwart, 10 saluting the work at Harrington and Collingham Gardens, Kensington as, 'among the finest examples of domestic architecture to be seen in London'. 11 George's country houses were no less successful. Also of considerable significance, is the fact that a continuous flow of talented young architects passed through George's office, over a period of thirty years, attracted by his high reputation.

For these reasons, a consideration of George's work has been long overdue; if a more complete understanding of architectural production and practice of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods is to be achieved. Saint remarks in the preface to his biography of Shaw, upon the difficulties of estimating

'Shaw's wide, but undefined architectural influence',
claiming that,

'in default of biographies of other late Victorian architects, it is not yet easy to write about this influence accurately'. 12

This thesis aims at providing a comprehensive account of the work of Sir Ernest George, executed in partnership with Vaughan, Peto and Yeates. Close attention has been paid to the nature of his architectural productions. Equally, consideration has been given to the conditions which prevailed at the time of their production, in an attempt to locate the work in the complicated and changing architectural context of the period. Thus, an examination of the pattern of patronage forms a central part of the thesis and the wider extent of the role of the architect, in terms of furniture, interior and garden design is considered.

In giving emphasis to both the works of George and the broader context of their production, it is hoped that this thesis will fulfill two roles: first, to redress the balance, by giving a full account of the work of an architect whose work has for so long remained unconsidered, or rather overshadowed, by consideration of his contemporaries; second, to give some account of the conditions of architectural practice in England in the late nineteenth, and early twentieth century, which will, it is hoped, go some way towards encouraging a more balanced evaluation of the roles of individual architects within that context.

CHAPTER 1; EARLY LIFE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRACTICE

Early Life and Education

(Pl. 1)
Ernest George was born on 13 June 1839, at 9 Portland Place, in the Parish of St George the Martyr, Southwark, in the subdivision of Kent Road, London, the second son of John George (1806-86) and Elizabeth Mary Higgs (b.1811, Lambeth, Surrey), daughter of William Higgs, wholesale ironmonger of Borough High Street, Southwark.

The firm of William Higgs and Son first appeared at 179 Borough High Street in 1830. By 1841 it had become Higgs and George, John George's partnership dating from about 1840. John George, born in Sevenoaks and described by his son Ernest as 'a man of Kent',¹ must either have joined the business at the time of his marriage to Elizabeth Higgs, or having worked there for some years, married Elizabeth, and subsequently and naturally had been taken into partnership after the birth of three sons, John William (b.1837), Ernest (b.1839) and Frederick Beardsworth (b.1840).

In 1841, the young George family of five² were living at 9 Portland Place. (Now named Bartholomew Street, it makes a junction with New Kent Road, Newington; east of the Elephant and Castle, and south of Borough High Street, Southwark). One of a terrace of substantial three-storey, brick dwellings, the house still survives.

Perhaps for reasons of economy, or because John George wished to be at hand to concentrate on establishing his position in the business, by 1851, the family had moved to 179 Borough High Street, for Ernest George recalled,

/'It suited my parents for several years to occupy a roomy old house adjoining the warehouse and yard and an early recollection is of the cranes that made delightful and dangerous playthings'.³

The warehouse, yard and offices in Borough High Street, were in the midst of an historically busy commercial area, the surroundings being full of interest.

Southwark, the most ancient and historic area of London outside the city,⁴ owed an early and continued importance to having, for centuries, the only approach road to London from Kent and the Continent. Until 1739-49, when Westminster Bridge was built, London Bridge, approached from Borough High Street, was the only bridge across the Thames. Hence the High Street was a place of ancient inns rejoicing in the names of 'Spur', 'Queens Head',

'Catherine Wheel' and others, for, as George recalled, Southwark was not only the centre of the wholesale iron trade, but also the centre of the London Hop Trade. The most famous of the inns were 'The Tabard', of Chaucer fame, and the 'White Hart' with Pickwickian associations. Many of the inns of the east side were demolished in the late nineteenth century, but 'The George', somewhat appropriately, survived as one of the first examples of an ancient galleried inn, secreted along a narrow entry between lofty walls with no frontage to the bustling street. The Hop Exchange stands on the opposite side of Borough High Street.

Southwark remained a largely undeveloped area (outside the original village), until the new Thames bridges were built, Blackfriars being the first (1756). Rennie's original Southwark Bridge (1819), (replaced appropriately by that designed by Ernest George, 1908-21), involved the making of a new approach, Southwark Bridge Road. Westminster and Waterloo Bridges, though not in Southwark, gave new access. As a result, hitherto undeveloped areas of Southwark rapidly became occupied by houses. Eventually five Thames bridges gave access to two important centres, St George's Circus and the Elephant and Castle.

Rapid development also gave rise to the Southwark of classic Dickensian lore; a region few ever desired to explore, characterised most intimately in Little Dorrit which enshrines Dickens's own unhappy recollections of lodging in Lant Street, off Borough High Street, while his family were imprisoned for debt in the nearby King's Bench Prison.

Crossing from the City by London Bridge in the 1840s, the top of Borough High Street would have presented a bustling, congested picture. To the west, St Mary Overy (the present Southwark Cathedral), occupied a cramped site, bordered on the south-west by Borough Market, the oldest municipal fruit and vegetable market in London, with its imposing entrance and administrative offices at the corner of Borough High Street and Southwark Street.

The George family remained in this colourful, commercial area with its theatrical associations until 1854, when Ernest and his brother John William were of school age. The family moved south to Albert Square, Kennington to quite a handsome, substantial, four storyed, part stucco, part brick town house in a pleasant, early

nineteenth century square, just off Clapham Road. The move suggests the material evidence of John George's establishment in a flourishing business.

It was, perhaps also as a result of his enthusiastic endeavours that the firm moved north across the river to new premises on the corner of Cannon Street and College Hill, in the City.

While living in Albert Square, Ernest and a brother ⁵ were 'at the school of the three Misses Hubert on Clapham Common', and later at Brighton with Mr Edward Houghton, 'a good scholar, who had a dull way of imparting knowledge'. ⁶ Ernest recalled,

'The finger joints of my right hand (my painting hand) have still the marks of the blackthorn which was a frequent aid to instruction'. ⁷

Apparently afflicted by bronchitis, Ernest was transferred to the School of William White at Reading,

'there learning was not forced, and White, who was skilful with the brush, took me out sketching, the pollarded willows by the riverside supplying my earliest essays as an artist'. ⁸

Ernest George's embryonic talents were not only nurtured by the sympathetic White, but also by his parents, his father in particular,

'I have always found inspiration in famous cities since visits in my youth to France or Germany with my father, who keenly felt the romance of the old world; he would patiently wait when I attempted sketching, and would light another cigar when he found me still unready to move. We owe much to those who early believed in us while there was no justification for faith'. ⁹

While still at Reading, Ernest 'measured up and plotted to scale the school house and grounds, and persuaded my parents I should like to become an architect.' ¹⁰

John and Elizabeth George were amenable to the suggestion since their other sons had, in all probability, already expressed an interest in joining their father's business, as the firm later became John George and Sons. ¹¹ Ernest recalls,

'The leading offices were considered, but we were advised I might get a closer insight into practical work under the wing of a rising man, and I was articled to Samuel Hewitt, who was making a practice

and doing nice work; but he did not live long enough to make a name. I spent my term of years with him in Buckingham Street, Adelphi, and he did his duty by me'. 12

So began Ernest George's architectural career, unostentatiously perhaps, but with John George doubtless feeling that his son could enjoy a sound introduction to solid commercial work with good prospects.

Pupillage and Training

Samuel Hewitt, 'architect and surveyor'¹³ remains a curiously elusive character. Listed as living in Overmans Almshouses, Montague Close, St Saviours Borough, just off Borough High Street and overlooking the river in the shadow of London Bridge and St Mary Overy; the Georges probably knew him through commercial circles. In 1857-58 Hewitt makes a fleeting appearance in the Post Office Directory as practising at 22 Buckingham Street, Adelphi. Thus articulated, George found himself not only in an area graced with many architect's offices, but also with romantic associations and picturesque features which appealed to the aspiring artist and architect. While serving his term (1856-60) he recalled,

'Our time not being always fully occupied, gave me opportunities of working for myself. The Adelphi was a fascinating quarter, and one would sometimes wander into that mysterious vaulted cavern of the brothers Adam that was open day and night, a secure sanctuary for thieves and garotters'. 14

Hewitt's recorded work was of an unexceptional quality. His designs for Cemetery Chapels, exhibited at the Conduit Galleries, in April 1859, were considered to be respectable, if uninspired. His design 'Nec Prece ned Pretio' entered the same year for the prestigious Manchester Assize¹⁵ Courts Competition merited some praise in the small print of the architectural journals, there was 'considerable ingenuity and originality in the plan', noted the Building News but, 'the approaches from the large hall to the Courts are scarcely large enough'.¹⁶ The entrance was marked by a gigantic tower, beautifully designed, but completely useless. Moreover, it dwarfed the main buildings by the side of it.

'If we set on one side this glaring defect, the design ranks with the best Gothic studies in the collection'. 17

Of interest, is the style adopted by George's master. An adaptation of the Venetian Gothic, more precisely, a fusion of English and Venetian, the Building News remarked of it,

'whilst the general forms of the latter have been adopted, the author's complete knowledge of the former style reveals itself in every bit of detail'. 18

Ruskin had written his Seven Lamps in 1849 and Stones of Venice in 1851-53, prophetically presenting the merits of Italian Gothic, and it is attractive to suppose that Hewitt had not only been quick to respond to contemporary preference, but also to recognize in the style, qualities of adaptability and versatility for modern needs.

By the late 1850s such publications as Street's Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages (1855), Scott's delayed Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture, Present and Future (supposedly written 1849 and published in 1857), and Thomas King's Study Book of Mediaeval Architecture and Art (1858), were beginning to commend Gothic to educated architects. Ideas were also disseminated through the pages of contemporary journals. Hewitt's design was certainly in accord with the general fashion for foreign Gothic, and it would almost have certainly been Hewitt who turned young George's attention to a mixture of Italian and English Gothic for which George and Vaughan were to show an early preference in the 1860s and 1870s.

While articled, George studied at the RA Schools, where he would have attended lectures by Charles Barry, perhaps catching some of the final lectures by C.R. Cockerell before his retirement from the Professorship in 1857. During the last year of his articles, George won the RA Architectural Gold Medal with his design for a Metropolitan Hotel, the subject of that year's competition. The choice of Italian Gothic rendered George's design the unwitting prompt for a condemnation by The Builder of what was now an ubiquitous employment of foreign Gothic. Anxious to promote the acceptance of 'but one current style', a viewpoint, they claimed 'admitted by those who differ most on other points',¹⁹ the journal argued,

'Let opinion of the art in the Elizabethan and Jacobean styles be what it may amongst educated architects, all will allow that the combination in those cases shows that some combination not devoid of art, might be made, of the systems that

are now in vogue, and without the defects which too much appear in designs, shown in the exhibitions, of a prominently medieval or foreign impress.' 20

The Building News was quick to point out, that George's design

'is based upon foreign Gothic models and reminds us much of a design, by, we think Mr Hewitt, for the Manchester Courts.' 21

Doubtless Hewitt's design was fresh in his pupil's mind, but the latter's freedom of treatment was considered creditable; there was a 'studied variety', but

'none of the extravagance so often seen in academic designs, and no vast intrusion of ornament. Mr Ernest George has sufficient originality and has evidently well studied the style he has so successfully adopted' 22

It was concluded, 'as the work of a student, betokens promise of still greater excellence'. 23

The design showed apartments arranged on four sides of a large, glass-covered court, the lower storey projecting and appropriated to shops with a mezzanine storey above, carried up to the height of the first floor of the hotel. Three storeys rose above tall windows on the right, passing through two storeys and lighting the assembly or ball-room - the two storey hall being a feature with which George was to experiment subsequently.

After four years of Hewitt's somewhat opaque tuition, George left Buckingham Street ²⁴ and early in 1860 an opportunity arose for him to spend 'a few months' in the office of William Allen Boulnois (1823-93) ²⁵ probably then at 6 Waterloo Place, Pall Mall. A pupil of Sydney Smirke, Boulnois had spent time in Italy and elsewhere on the Continent between 1845 and 1848, before returning to set up practice in 1848. He enjoyed an extensive practice, having been responsible for several blocks of offices, together with wharf and factory premises on the Thames. This commercial work was further extended through his operations as a surveyor in valuation and compensation cases, together with other professional activities.

Nothing is known of George's work during his few months with Boulnois. However brief his stay, the practical experience in such an office must have been valuable, and it provided George with the wherewithal to embark on a tour of France and Germany later that year,

doubtless to perfect his accomplished penmanship. Some of his sketches were included in his volume Sketches German and Swiss, published in 1870; perhaps inspired by the example of Norman Shaw, who had published Architectural Sketches from the Continent in 1858, the fruits of his travels in France, Italy and Germany as the R A Travelling Student, an honour he gained in 1854. George was years later to recall,

'I value to this day the several books I managed to buy out of my youthful allowance, and among these are the sketches of Shaw and Nesfield. In their exposition of the architecture of France the examples chosen are all Mediaeval, later work was not accounted of in those days,' 26

but while Shaw retained a lifelong preference for French work to that of German, and liked Italian work least, George was to show an interest in all three.

In November 1861, having returned vitalized by his travels, George set up in partnership with a close friend from the Royal Academy Schools, Thomas Vaughan.

Partnership with Thomas Vaughan and the Establishment of the Practice

Described by George as 'a very earnest student',²⁷ Thomas Vaughan was clearly an architect of promise. Hailing from Stoke Newington in north London, Vaughan studied with George at the R A Schools, winning three R A silver medals in 1857-58 for Architecture, Perspective and Sciagraphy, together with the Soane Medallion with travelling studentship awarded by the RIBA in 1859. The Soane Medallion design for a Circus,²⁸ (Pl.2) with its circular plan and projecting centre and wings, was modelled on contemporary French revivals of classicism. The employment of cast and wrought iron in the roof structure showed Vaughan to be adventurous in his use of new materials.

His draughtsmanship emerges, from a whole series of exhibited works, as meticulous, but somewhat stiff and mechanical when compared with the fluidity of George's drawings. His 'View down the East Transept of Beverley Minster', exhibited 1859, although considered creditable, was criticised for being 'somewhat confused in consequence of the point of view not being well chosen'.²⁹ Pencil drawings of Durham and Lincoln Cathedrals were 'neatly executed' 30

while others were 'most carefully executed and as neat as if copied from photographs'.³¹ With the studentship Vaughan travelled to France, as drawings of the inlaid pavement designed by M. Stuhnal, in St Chapelle, Paris, view of the aisle of ^{the} Chevet ^{of the} Abbaye, St Denis, a part of the south transept of Notre Dame, as well as the spires and Chevet lantern and north transept at Coutances and the triforium of ^{the} Chevet ^{of} Bayeux, and the l'Abbaye d'Ardennes, Caen, exhibited in 1860,³² bear witness. In 1861 and 1862 his 'careful draughtsmanship' which it was thought, 'lacked the spirited touch of Nesfield',³³ was shown in his drawings exhibited at Conduit Street, of Amiens Cathedral, houses in the Rue aux Fevres, Lisieux, ^{the} Chevet of St Etienne and Abbaye aux Hommes, Caen.³⁴

On his return in 1861, from 'travels in France and Italy',³⁵ Vaughan appears to have taken the initiative and proposed that he and George should enter into partnership. First called Vaughan and George, the partnership began in November 1861 by securing premises on the third floor at Cannon Street, near to George's father's City offices. Motivated by youthful hopes of 'a city connection',³⁶ their early expectations would have been in the commercial field. Vaughan's personality and private life remain shadowy, largely on account of his delicate health and early death on 2 March 1875, but he had no illusions about his rôle in the partnership. Described as being 'chiefly engaged in the superintendence and active duties of his profession, to which he assiduously devoted himself',³⁷ he was magnanimous in his anxiety 'that nothing should be attributed to him that emanated from his partner, who undertook the more artistic branch of the profession'.³⁸ An arrangement of duties which evidently suited George in this, and two subsequent partnerships, for he commented retrospectively,

'I have always felt that the complete architect is hardly to be found in any one individual. The creative artist is seldom at the same time the best business man, with qualifications for determining estimates, supervising works and materials and meeting the many legal and other problems and difficulties that arise in building operations. In matters of judgment, companionship is very helpful and in a busy life partnership serves to secure certain times of leisure and recreation'.³⁹

Somewhat surprisingly, therefore, George added

'I do not advise similar haste to our embryo architects today'.⁴⁰

There is nothing to suggest that he was dissatisfied with the arrangement, or that the partnership was anything but happy and successful - the lack of breathing space in which to take stock of his position perhaps galled George - the expediency of the arrangement having seduced him at a time of uncertainty, when his career was not clearly orientated.

Their early activities remain obscure, the only record of their work between 1861-64 being brief references to works exhibited independently at the Conduit Street Galleries. Vaughan showed further drawings, made during his travels abroad with the RIBA studentship,⁴¹ while George exhibited a design for a 'college', considered by the Building News to be 'creditabile', but lacking in the 'purity of style and the free development' conspicuous in the design exhibited alongside by Nesfield's friend C.C.Mileham.⁴²

Messrs Vaughan and George's first joint exhibit appeared in 1863, and was of 'a large church', for which they sent no plan, but the exterior showed 'lofty nave, apsidal choirs, transepts and western towers' and was noteworthy since it was, 'remarkable as being further removed from the type of Early French architecture preferred by most of the competitors than anything else exhibited'.⁴³ In April 1864 they put out for tender, work at 14 and 16 Great Portland Street, occupied by John and William Vokins, the carvers, but there is no evidence that they were working with George and Vaughan at any time.

1866 was to prove a more eventful year, that in which George married Mary Allan, daughter of Robert Burn of Epsom. They were to have seven children, but George was left a widower after only ten years of marriage. In the 1860s Ernest's father, John George, moved from Albert Square, Kennington to Manor Park Terrace, Mitcham Lane, Streatham (now demolished),⁴⁴ probably in a newly built terrace. Soon after his marriage, Ernest took 1 Grecian cottages⁴⁵ (now demolished), near the junction of Beulah Hill and Crown Dale (then Lane), Lower Norwood, where he remained until 1887. An ancient and eligible suburban parish, with many sizeable Georgian houses set in parkland between Streatham and Tooting Bec Commons, Streatham developed quite rapidly after the Crystal Palace and West End Railway cut its way across London and out to Streatham.⁴⁶ Aside from the salubrious character of Streatham, the move was of great significance, since George was to enjoy professional and personal connections with the area lasting some thirty-eight years.

Minor Works had been undertaken in 1865; a 'manufactory', Liquorpond Street, Finsbury - now part of Clerkenwell Road:⁴⁷ and 'Houses in Caledonian Road', Holloway,⁴⁸ which being close to Vaughan's native Stoke Newington, probably emanated from local connections. In May of 1865, 'exterior views of Christchurch, Wribbenhall, Worcestershire, by John Thomas Christopher and Ernest George, were exhibited at Conduit Street, which indicated restoration rather than a new design, 'though some of the windows and other features of the building suggest the impress of a modern taste', reported the Building News.⁴⁹ In the event the designs were unexecuted, a new church, All Saints', designed by Arthur Blomfield was consecrated in 1879.⁵⁰ J.T.Christopher, Shaw's 'uncongenial travelling companion'⁵¹ of 1854, practised at 14 Bucklesbury, City of London, near to George and Vaughan. Clearly a friend, he proposed George for Fellowship of RIBA in 1881 (and Harold Peto in 1884).⁵² For some reason George and Vaughan had an office in Croydon as well as Cannon Street in 1865.

1866 was without recorded work. George contented himself by exhibiting 'pictorial illustrations from ancient foreign buildings', a collection 'supplemented by fragments from Seville, Saragoza, Cologne, Lübeck, Marienburg, Nuremburg and Pisa'.⁵³ He appears to have travelled abroad regularly - between 1865 and 1868 he exhibited drawings and watercolours of Lausanne Cathedral, Saragoza, Seville, Calais, Chartres, Burgos, Notre Dame, St Pierre and Caen.

In 1868 the Building News lamented, that,

'the exterior view of St Jude's church, East Brixton by Mr E.C.Robins; or No 186 (Christ Church Herne Bay) by Messrs George and Vaughan, are in actual course of perpetuation, can only be a cause of grief to all concerned'.⁵⁴

The work at Herne Bay, Kent, involved the alteration and enlargement of a Union Congregational Church, built in 1834, by A.C.Clayton. Their proposed design included a tower, Italian in outline, restrained in detail, of which only the foundations and about twenty-seven feet of the structure was built,⁵⁵ lack of funds having prevented further progress. Had it been completed it would have lent a dignified accent to the whole. Executed alterations

included an extension at the east end. A chancel and transepts were added, the latter absorbing the most easterly window on each side of the nave, leaving four on each side in place of the original five. The north door bears the date 1868. The proposed design shows an early preference for Venetian Gothic which was more fully rehearsed in commercial premises such as those for Messrs Sotheran, Baer & Co., in 1872.

By 1868 small commissions were appearing in Streatham; the laying out of the new, 'Ribton Street', leading out of Streatham High Road,⁵⁶ and the design of ten cottages to be built in a little triangle⁵⁷ between the Streatham High Road, Ribton Street and the railway line, and alterations to a house in Streatham Common for a Dr Stuart⁵⁸. Further afield, they exhibited a design for a terrace with proposed hotel at Saltburn, Durham, described as 'a work of much originality, simplicity and merit',⁵⁹ but apparently not executed.

The alterations to Winsor and Newton's factory in Gillies Street, Kentish Town, London, of 1868^(PL.3) warrant attention, since they show George and Vaughan settling into a simple brick Gothic concept to be employed elsewhere. Winsor and Newton, paint manufacturers, established 1832, had premises at Blackfriars and at Kings Cross, but in 1844 they dispensed with these in favour of a purpose-built, steam-powered factory in Kentish Town, known as the North London Colour Works. After gratifying success at the Great International Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, William Winsor died in 1865, leaving his share of the firm to his son. Alterations were perhaps initiated by the new partner. Work executed appears to be at the surviving north end, the main section appears to have been rebuilt more recently. The surviving work, in yellowish brick, is pleasant and unexceptional tending towards a simple brick Gothic. Winsor and Newton were clearly satisfied, for they re-employed George and Vaughan to construct an 'iron building' in 1872.⁶⁰

In 1869 there began what was to be a long lasting and fruitful association with the formidable Revd Stenton Eardley (1821-83), vicar of Immanuel Church, Streatham from 1854 until 1883. Eardley, a fashionable preacher and temperance fiend, who was to assume the stature of a local cult figure, was to be directly or indirectly the source of a whole series of commissions. Increasing population of the district made it necessary to supplement the existing National Schools, designed by G.G.Scott in 1856 and extended by George and

Vaughan in 1874, which adjoined Immanuel Church on the Streatham High Road. George and Vaughan were accordingly commissioned in 1869 by Eardley to design the Immanuel Infants Schools, with two adjoining cottages at the corner of Colmar and Ellison Roads, Streatham.⁶¹ The money for the School was provided by the Leaf family, whose initials appear on the school house. The Leafs, benefactors of Immanuel Church and Parish, were in the wholesale drapery trade. The complex was in brick, with patterned tiles to the roof and Gothic in style.^(Pl.4) The most striking feature of the school was the Nesfieldian oak belfry and tall conical shingle spire, was sadly removed in 1970. The first floor plan evidences the enlightened zeal which was to become the hallmark of all Stenton Eardley's endeavours, in the form of a 24' square mechanics' reading room, approached by the turret staircase and with a separate external door. This staircase also led to the schoolmistress's room whence she could survey the reading room.

11 Argyll Street, London W1. The Consolidation of Practice

1869 was to be the year of first real opportunity. George recalled:

'We worked happily together upon such matters as our friends entrusted us, but these were generally west of Temple Bar, and after three years we moved to 18, Argyll Street, which street Norman Shaw had already made classic ground'.⁶²

George and Vaughan succeeded to the business of Frederick Hering (C.1799-1869) an interesting, but unprolific architect with offices on the first floor of 11 Argyll Street W1. Hering, an 'accomplished and amiable man' who 'seems to have obtained few opportunities to distinguish himself',⁶³ was the brother of the artist G.E.Hering (1805-79). George perhaps knew Hering through artistic acquaintances. The latter died in May 1869, and George and Vaughan took over his business and presumably the 'good will'. The premises were perfectly situated, just off Oxford Street and parallel with Regent Street, but more importantly in an area particularly favoured by architects. Many architects of the 1840s and 1850s had offices near All Saints', Margaret Street, while others collected further south, around Charing Cross, Butterfield favouring the Adelphi while Scott inhabited Spring Gardens.

Argyll Street itself, held particular interest. Shaw's Uncle Anthony Salvin's office had been at number 30, now Shaw and Nesfield's, the pair

having taken the remainder of the lease for the ground floor in 1863. Shaw left Argyll Street in 1876, moving east to 30 Bloomsbury Square, a move which inaugurated 'an architectural stampede'⁶⁴ by others to legal chambers or Bloomsbury attics. George, however, was to remain faithful to the area, moving only as far as the other side of Regent Street, to Maddox Street in late 1883, early 1884⁶⁵ at a point when the practice was expanding rapidly.

Foreknowledge of George's later exercises in the Queen Anne style draws attention to Frederick Hering's most celebrated building with which George must have been familiar - 2 Palace Green, Kensington, London, designed for the novelist Thackeray in an early eighteenth century style, opposite the genuine red brick of Kensington Palace. This attracted a good deal of attention, on account of its being a very early adumbration of the Queen Anne style of the 1870s; a style which was to preoccupy George in the mid 1870s. There appears to be no other connection between George and Vaughan and Hering.

Whether as a result of a growing reputation built on designs exhibited at the Architectural Galleries, or the acquisition of Hering's 'good will', or merely the added 'cachet' of establishment in a fashionable architectural precinct, by 1869-70 George and Vaughan had attracted the attention of both Henry William Peek (1825-98), the biscuit manufacturer, later created 1st Bt; and the second Duke of Wellington. Perhaps representing opposite ends of the establishment spectrum, the patronage of these two men was crucial to the consolidation of practice.

George recalls,

'One of our early works was preparing drawings for Bodegas, for the storage of wine; also a villa for the Duke of Wellington's estate, Molino del Rey near Granada. The second Duke had been persuaded to plant this property, given to the great Duke, which was in the choicest of the Sherry (Amontilla) district. These buildings were only partly carried out, but they gave me my reason for a first visit to Spain, a country that has always had a fascination for me'. 66.

Vaughan also travelled to Spain,⁶⁷ doubtless to attend to the administrative as well as artistic details.

The first Duke of Wellington had been created Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo and a Grandee of the First Class by the Cortes in 1812 in gratitude for his intervention at Salamanca. The presentation, in

perpetuity, of the Casa Real together with the Soto de Roma and Molino del Rey estates, accompanied the honour. The Duke, with an exacting career in politics ahead of him after Waterloo, not to mention his commitment to the Army, and other properties demanding his attention, never found time to visit his Andalusian estates. Up until the late 1860s successive agents were never in direct supervision and the estates fell into neglect. The Duke died in 1852 and it was an acquaintance of the second Duke, Horace Hammick, himself an owner of vineyards at Montilla, near Córdoba who was to initiate activity on the derelict estates. His planting of 2,000 vines resulted in wine becoming the chief source of income of Molino del Rey over the next twenty years. Eventually appointed agent, Hammick found the house and mill in a state of disrepair, and a shelter for bad characters. The second Duke proposed to visit the estate, which so far had never seen a member of the family, and apparently commissioned Hammick to build a house large enough to accommodate a considerable retinue.⁶⁸ Hammick, with considerable knowledge of the Duke's taste, might have suggested George and Vaughan as suitable officianados. The proposed villa appears substantial. (Pl. 5) However, local architectural possibilities fell considerably short, and the plan was modified to what is now the old part of La Torre. Owing to the continued disturbed state of the country, the ducal visit never materialised, and he died in 1880. The proposed villa, in brick, showed the ample broad wall surfaces, evident in miniature at Immanuel Schools. The circular tower, relieved by open arcading, lent an indigenous note, while behind it a simple square tower made a picturesque accent.

From surviving photographs⁶⁹ (Pls 6 & 7) the wine stores appear simple but substantial affairs, and like the villa, show an appropriately vague Spanish vernacular flavour, with slightly Baroque shaped gables. The entrance, with its gradually preceding Romanesque arch, and remarkable simplicity, almost anticipates Sullivan or Richardson.

For some years, since the advocacy in Ruskin's Stones of Venice (1851-53), of Byzantine and Gothic styles for commercial premises, a number of architects had been relieving city buildings from their 'usual vulgarity'. Eastlake had pronounced,

'Whatever may be urged in support of national traditions there can be little doubt that Italian Gothic lends itself more readily than most styles, to the treatment of a facade in which the relation of wall space to aperture, is restricted by modern requirements.'⁷⁰

Somers Clarke the elder, with his buildings for the Credit and Discount Co., and the Auction Mart Co. in Lothbury, quite close to Cannon Street, demonstrated this preference C.1866, others followed. In 1872, George's contemporary Rowland Plumbe, designed number 25 in neighbouring Austin Friars - a richly polychromatic facade with terracotta enrichments revealing an iron construction, providing an interesting variation of Venetian Gothic which met with an enthusiastic reception.⁷¹ The year before Plumbe's design George and Vaughan designed 8 Stratton Street, London W1, (Pl.8) Perhaps their most confident handling of Italian Gothic to date, the tall narrow fronted building is of red brick and stone. Although more assured, the employment of thin miniature columns with 'classical capitals', as part of the upper central fenestration and balcony detailing, appears inappropriate; these etiolated members look frail and detract from the otherwise confident handling of the upper section. A more serious weakness was the balcony over the ground floor windows, formed by insubstantial looking flags, originally carried on light iron brackets (now replaced by reinforced concrete pillars). Upon this George and Vaughan arranged a stone bay window, projecting as far as the balcony. The absence of any feature under the soffit of the balcony creates an abrupt effect, the balcony appears unsupported, the effect being further emphasised by the heavy stonework of the bay, indeed 'the eye demanded corbelling'.⁷² The ground floor arrangement, with windows to the left of the front door, and a gently pointed archway giving access to the rear, was somewhat arbitrary. The interior is restrained, leaning towards the classical. Despite its acknowledged defects, the design was thought to display 'talent and originality'.⁷³

If 8 Stratton Street W1. was tentative, and to a degree, unresolved, the premises for Messrs Southeran, Baer and Co.'s bookshop in Piccadilly, London W1. (Pl.9) were, compositionally, a triumph. Regrettably now demolished, the building which replaced previous premises, fulfilled the challenging opportunity afforded by a prime site on the corner of Piccadilly and Swallow Street.

'This building reminds one a little of a Venetian Palace by its solid, dignified massing, its use of surface ornament, and its open loggia with large round shafts and capitals of a Venetian type; but the main features are more French and Flemish than Italian; the whole is good Gothic, well put together and the architects unquestionably understand what they are about'.⁷⁴

so commented the Building News.

The premises had a narrow frontage in Piccadilly, and one of 100' in Swallow Street. Internally, height was given to the shop by installing a gallery or balcony in place of the usual mezzanine floor; windows to this gallery gave good light and ventilation to the shop. An oak staircase led up to the gallery, continuing up to the second floor, which was used as a showroom for secondhand books. The three floors above, which provided suites of rooms for either residential occupation or offices, were approached by a separate entrance. It was the exterior, however, which was particularly accomplished, 'the specialities' of which brought, 'occasional passers by to stand in the street to look and comment'.⁷⁵ While avoiding heavy cornices and projections, which frequently obscured light and harboured soot in London Streets, George and Vaughan nevertheless managed to create a forceful shadow at second floor level, by deeply recessing the windows and placing balconies in front.

The piers between the lights on the third storey, contained panels with carved representations of scrolls and manuscripts, while above, a dormer served to break up the skyline. The rich and varied detail on the Piccadilly facade was apposite and attractive, but it possibly contributed to an effect of delineation between portions, upsetting the unity slightly. This was avoided on the return face, the Swallow Street elevation was broadly treated with rows of windows connected by bands of carved foliage, the spandrels of the pointed arches over them decorated. Whatever architecturally satisfying qualities appertained to the return face, it was the Piccadilly elevation which attracted all the attention.

The use of coloured decoration was new to George and Vaughan, and arguably they were over-enthusiastic. The ground floor decoration related to the history of literature; Egyptians inscribing hieroglyphics on a sarcophagus; King Alfred being presented by his mother with a manuscript; Monks Copying Manuscripts; the Dream of Gutenberg and finally Caxton, reading the first proof of the Canterbury Tales - all apparently executed in low tones of cool colours. The long panel under the loggia was divided into three sections, representing etching, lithography and wood engraving - employing two or three distinct colours, the figures, which were about two feet high and distinctly executed by Henry Burrow, were to be read at street level. Portrait medallions of Shakespeare, Schiller and Dante (complete with moustache), featured too.

While some admired the quaint picturesqueness, 'which is not, however, allowed to interfere with its practical utility', others condemned as 'medieval 'childishness',⁷⁶ the employment of the traditional device of illustrating processes of the trade, though it was a practice encouraged in competition designs. The literary references on the ground floor were admired though, since they suggested an interest beyond the mere material uses of the building and, 'by implication ennoble the purpose for which it is erected'.⁷⁷ Were George and Vaughan to temper their work 'judiciously' they might, said The Builder, provide better things in the future.⁷⁸

Youthful enthusiasm to exploit the potential of the site was understandable and excusable, indeed the degree of self-indulgence which caused people to stop in the street, entirely fulfilled the aims and expectations of Sotheran, Baer and Company. Such an arresting mixture could only be advantageous, and well worth their investment of £8,000.

Of particular interest was the introduction of French and Flemish overtones to the accepted canons of modern Italian Gothic. To date, neither architect had visited the Low Countries,⁷⁹ and yet they were quick to respond to the picturesque potential of the Flemish vocabulary that George was to make his own in the 1880s.

Commissions emanating directly, or indirectly, from Streatham connections continued in 1872 with a Cottage Hospital on the Roxeth Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill. (Pl.10) Charles Leaf presented the necessary land and probably suggested George and Vaughan as architects. Plain in style, compact and practical in plan and execution, (all external woodwork was of oak, and window casements of iron to reduce future maintenance costs), it shows an early employment of hygienically splayed angles of internal wall joints, while the tall chimneys, tile-hung upper storey, hipped roof and porches, were features constantly reformulated to create picturesque domestic designs.

The second commission came from the Revd Stenton Eardley, who, while on holiday in Switzerland c.1870, had appreciated the need for a more suitable place of worship than the Coffee Room of Bernina's hotel in Samaden, used hitherto as a Sunday meeting place by the English who flocked to the mountain village.

The building fund of £1,200 was raised as a result of the tireless efforts of Eardley, it was doubtless he who coerced Bernina into

donating not only the site, but materials and a donation towards Immanuel Church, ^(Pl.11) as it was named. The site, 6,000 feet above sea level, and a day's journey from any town made skilled labour difficult to engage, thus testing the architects' ingenuity. The aesthetic was less problematic, George had already made a study of picturesque Swiss examples, albeit German in architectural character. ⁸⁰ Stylistically attuned to its surroundings, it was constructed from granite quarried from the rock on which it stood. The fall of the hill from west to east left the chancel high above ground level, carried on open arches giving the church an attenuated and elegant appearance. The roofs and spire with *flèche* were covered with shingle, and boarded Swiss gables were employed, since they afforded the best shelter from the snow, as well as being easier to construct than stone coping, given the circumstances and position. Messrs Laver & Co. provided the east window, Messrs Powell the reredos of glass mosaic, and James Forsyth carved the four Evangelists in the panels of the pulpit. George employed all three subsequently. Forsyth, the virtuoso carver in wood or stone, enjoyed a well established reputation in 1872, having worked at Wells Cathedral with Salvin and executed carving for Nesfield, Shaw and others in the 1860's. Eardley was to instigate the fund for a second church in Tarasp, Engadin, Switzerland, designed by George and Peto in 1883. Eardley died seeing neither funds nor church completed. ⁸¹

In 1867 Vaughan moved from Stoke Newington to Bromley in Kent. He first rented, and then bought, ⁸² 51 Palace Grove, New Bromley, a typical double-fronted, square-built Victorian town house, with its own garden, suggestive of a degree of prosperity.

His move probably accounts for two commissions in 1874. Bromley Cottage Hospital, ⁸³ (Pl.12) a single storey building, important in that its four tall chimneys and half timbered gables foreshadow George's estate cottages in Chislehurst and Pinner. It also betrays the influence of Shaw and Nesfield, an influence which is more pronounced in the second commission of 1874, Orrest Bank, Orpington, ^(Pl.13) designed for John Woodhams Fox, who together with his brother Thomas Samuel Fox, were partners in the Oak Brewery, Orpington. Both lived at Orrest Bank in 1874, but in 1878 Thomas Fox commissioned George and Peto to design Beechwood, built nearby.

Bromley and the area to the south held special significance. As

early as 1862, Shaw and Nesfield⁸⁴ had sketched examples of Kent and Sussex vernacular. Indeed Shaw had been busy in the area, designing in 1862, a small brick built gardener's cottage on the Beechwood estate; in 1863, the unexecuted design for Bromley Town Hall; in 1863-64 the Bailiff's Cottage on the Bromley Place Estate, for Coles Child and in 1864-65 and 1868-69,⁸⁵ additions to Willesley at Cranbrook, for the artist J.C.Horsley. To the west of Cranbrook, at Groombridge, Shaw designed Glen Andred (1866-68), for the marine painter Edward Cooke, and Leyswood (1868-69),⁸⁶ for James Temple, where he 'welded and tested the elements of his domestic 'Old English' style',⁸⁷ exploring the vocabulary to its limits. When found deficient, the 'Old English' could be supplemented with borrowings from the domestic work of Street and Butterfield. Already an admirer of Shaw, George cannot fail to have been impressed by his innovative works. At Orrest Bank (1874), the exterior belies the simplicity and regularity of the plan. The taut formula of the Harrow Hospital (1872), gives way to a bold broad chimney stack rising from the right of the entrance, tile-hanging and plaster decoration in the interstices of the half timbering. The bay windows intimate a mild retention of lofty domestic Gothic, but there is manifestly a richening of ingredients, redolent with echoes of Shaw's work at Bromley, Cranbrook and Groombridge, The echoes are strongest, however, at Rousdon, which Vaughan did not live to see completed. He died on 2 March 1875, 'Brain fever, brought on by over-work, and from which it appears, he had been suffering only a short time, was the immediate cause of death'.⁸⁸ George recalled,

'with various works in hand, we had now a steady practice. My good partner - always a delicate man - breaking down in health, died, and after his death I worked alone for a time'.⁸⁹

Work continued at Rousdon and by June 1875 George had secured an important commission for 18 and 19 South Audley Street, Mayfair, London, for Messrs Thomas Goode, the china wholesaler and retailer with a fast growing reputation.

George was to work alone for only twelve months.

Rousdon, Devon (1874-83) and Associated Work for Sir Henry W.Peek (1825-98).

'It is pleasant to view in retrospect the good friends who had faith or courage to employ or to

recommend the young practitioner who had yet his spurs to win. We had some good houses to build (I wish they were better), but the first work of importance was Rousdon, Devon, for Sir Henry Peek M.P., a large country house built on a cliff, then bare, but now finely timbered by the judicious planting of Robert Marnock, then an old man, who had a fine sense of landscape gardening understood by so few.' 90

Peek's patronage was both adventurous and timely, he provided George and Vaughan with their first opportunity to design a country house, a field which George was to make his *métier*.

Henry William Peek, M.P. for Wimbledon from 1868, knighted in 1874, came from a family of Devon extraction ⁹¹ which had made its fortune by importing tea, then by expanding into groceries and Peek Frean biscuits. The original firm was founded in 1819, but it was Sir Henry's father, James Peek, who founded Peek Frean & Co., biscuit manufacturers which had its factory at Dockhead, St Saviour's, Bermondsey, just east of Tower Bridge and Borough High Street, Southwark.

Henry Peek had lived at Wimbledon House, Surrey until his purchase C.1868 of the Rousdon Estate, with its 1,100 acres. Family connections might have drawn him to Devon, and it is clear from sketches by George of existing farmhouses on the estate, ⁹² that as early as 1869 Peek was planning improvements to the estate, and a house commensurate with his position.

The precise circumstances surrounding Henry Peek's commissioning of George and Vaughan are unclear. There might have been a city connection, on the other hand Peek was interested in architectural matters. As Sir Francis Peek suggests,

'Since he (George) and my great-grandfather both operated in the City of London they may have been close neighbours or since Sir Ernest would have been in his twenties in the 1860s, I know that my great-grandfather was actively interested in the education and training of young people - and he therefore may have wanted to encourage a young, rising man'.⁹³

Rousdon ^(Pl 14) was an arresting *début*. On the exposed cliff above Lyme Regis (400' above sea level), its long spreading composition, variously described as 'Franco-Flemish' ⁹⁴ and 'late Tudor, treated with freedom and originality,' ⁹⁵ showed various influences. It was an original combination of the Old English of Shaw and Nesfield, with

an underlying thread of 1860s muscularity, a possible legacy from G. E. Street.⁹⁶

The approach to the main house is from the north, across a square enclosed courtyard.^(Pl.15) The sober Tudor mullioned windows and sturdy Gothic porch are embellished by a whole series of features. The 'Old English' of Shaw and Nesfield makes its appearance in irregularly grouped tile-hung gables and bay windows, prominent roofs and tall panelled brick chimney stacks. The carriage porch itself, with stone piers and arches, carries a gabled superstructure of half timber work.^(Pl.16) Although broader and perhaps lower, this gable draws strongly from the Leyswood entrance (1868-69), while the arches beneath, recall the boldness of those of Nesfield's wing at Coombe Abbey (1863-65). Further embellishment was provided by Free Gothic and Renaissance carving by the local sculptor Harry Hems, but by far the most striking feature is the decidedly continental looking tower, focussing attention on the grand end of the establishment. It evokes that of Shaw at Leyswood^(Pl.17) - with its tile-hung hutch, which in turn was a 'deft adaptation of Nesfield's stable tower at Cloverley'⁹⁷ George went on to add his own contribution to the tower formulae with a second tower,^(Pls 18&27) strong in Franco-Flemish character, with irregular fenestration and teak arcade beneath the roof. This tower served as an impressive entrance to the courtyard around which are grouped the stable buildings, estate office, coachman's flat and fives court. Necessarily simpler in style, to accord with its function, the courtyard clock tower provided a reminiscence of George's travels - there is a hint of the city gateways of Nuremburg sketched by George in 1865-66, combined with a wide, low arch of the type favoured by Nesfield. In February 1870, George had published a volume of pen and ink drawings (from which etchings had been made by George), entitled Sketches, German and Swiss.⁹⁸ 'The sketches are too free to form a technical work', protested George,

'and perhaps at the same time too architectural to please everyone. They are the sketches of an architect to whom the time worn beauties of an ancient town rival the charms of mountain and lake - who is content to paint for four or five hours in a dark, narrow street, while overhanging eaves and crazy weather stained gables, amid a throng of busy passengers and a crowd of gaping, garlic-savoured spectators, when he might be travelling the mountain side.'⁹⁹

This deep rooted feeling for the picturesque was scarcely to change throughout the whole of George's career - and is strongly evidenced in the picturesque clock tower. A carillon, by Gillet and Bland, with ten bells and fitted with keyboard, housed in the tower evoked old Flemish belfries, although the choice of music was more chauvinistic, 'God Save the Queen', 'Rule Britannia' and other English airs being played as well as morning and evening hymns. Surmounting the saddle back roof was a thin elegant weather vane characteristic of many delicate, picturesque touches by George.

On the south front, ^(Pls.19&20) grander conceits were favoured in preference to the comfortable Old English idiom of the north front, and while there is a vestige of 1860s muscularity, there are one or two hints for the future. The south-west tile-hung gables, like those of Orrest Bank, Orpington (1874), look forward to Hambly Houses, Streatham (1877), and the projecting stone balcony, with open arch, presages that of Glencot, Wells, Somerset (1887). The solidity of construction was commensurate with the demands of the exposed position of the house. The walls were 3' thick and of a special waterproof construction, formed throughout of chert, and large grey flints quarried on the estate, lined with 9" of brickwork which was covered vertically with half an inch of asphalt before the application of the flint work. ¹⁰⁰ Purbeck, as the least porous stone obtainable was chosen for all the dressings, and the back joists of every stone were painted with hydrophylas (a patent substance to exclude damp), as a preventative measure against damp. Fareham red bricks and Bridgewater tiles were employed for chimneys and roof respectively. One interesting feature was the exposed fireproof construction of brick and iron in the Gothic cloister.

If the exterior of the house showed the influence of Shaw and Nesfield, the planning indicated no such influence. ^(Pls.21&22) It is tempting to make comparisons between Shaw's Leyswood (1868-69), and Rousdon since both employ courtyards, but any similarities can be confined to matters of style, where comparisons with Cloverley Hall (1864-70), can also be made. The formality of the courtyard at Leyswood (covered way, south side not shown on 1870 R.A. Drawing) was deceptive, the house itself was quite an extended ramble, the rooms in the main block interlocked in such a way as to contrive maximum

window area and outside wall. Shaw's later houses were to become considerably more compact. George, however started from a different premise - the old English manor style with its flexible plan and versatile exterior as one of its virtues, was eschewed by George in favour of a quadrangle plan, equally old, but possibly more difficult to use successfully. This was a significant choice, for although he seemed reluctant to employ it again, George was nevertheless to adhere fairly consistently to regular planning, avoiding the haphazard results of basing plans on Old English precedents - a practice taken to the extreme by George Devey.¹⁰¹ Free planning was to hold little attraction for George, Elizabethan plans, either in H or E form were to become particular favourites. The choice of a quadrangle plan at Rousdon, indicates that George and Vaughan were already conversant with early castles and great hall houses, and were already aware of the possibilities of the scheme as highlighted by Wyatt's work at Wilton, and Wyatville's at Longleat. The latter was particularly influential by drawing attention to the possibilities of modernization with the insertion of cloisters as corridors, in that it was illustrated in John Britton's Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain, Vol. 1, 1807. Some years later in 1858, Scott had declared, in Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture Present and Future, that

'the two great types for the plan of the grand mansion are, perhaps, that which is, and that which is not, arranged around an enclosed court or quadrangle'.¹⁰²

Scott could not find a client willing to adopt the courtyard plan, and the few examples built before 1870 had a double pile¹⁰³ main block and occupied only three sides of a square, like Blore's Pull Court (1834-46), and were quite unlike anything Scott had in mind. He favoured examples such as Hengrave Hall¹⁰⁴, where a simple string of rooms went all round a quadrangle. George might have favoured the quadrangle plan since the site was exposed, but whatever the prompting, the solution was perhaps one of the closest approaches to the ideal, despite the total asymmetry of the exterior. There was no hint of a rambling plan or change of angle at Rousdon.

The house was raised up on a basement and had a full set of rooms below the enclosed quadrangle and first service court. The inner court was treated as a cloister and except for the butler's room, all four ranges

were for family use. While the rooms were sensibly arranged, the house demonstrates the inherent weaknesses of the enclosed courtyard scheme, namely, the great lengths of corridors required - they ran round three sides of the inner courtyard and the two-storeyed mediæval great hall filled the north side and precluded crossing at first floor level, which made for additional walking. The luggage room, for instance, as well as the other service rooms, was a daunting distance from the principal bedrooms. By way, perhaps, of compensation to the footsore servants, the floors had interesting mosaic designs, those of the second and third floors being 'executed by the female convicts at Woking' ¹⁰⁵.

There was, nevertheless, much originality to commend the house internally. The tower, always guaranteed to captivate the imagination of any architect, was carefully justified by George. G.G. Scott had regretfully conceded ¹⁰⁶ that the provision of towers 'must be limited to their utility'. At Rousdon George sought precedents in Hatherop ¹⁰⁷, St Audries ¹⁰⁸ and Wadhurst ¹⁰⁹, where towers were planned as vertical suites, usually comprising bachelor bedrooms and bathroom. Henry Peek's scientific interests were to be George's justification. The north-east tower, (Pl.16) with its exterior access from the north and interior access from the hall and library, formed Peek's vertical suite. A study or justice room on the ground floor was provided with its own small porch for access from the outside and a descending staircase led up to the dressing room, on up to the museum, finally reaching the belvedere with its roof supported by arcaded teak posts, the teak floor layout reminiscent of that of a yacht.

On the south side, the garden range was extended to form another wing which held service rooms to the north, and an invalid suite to the south. The service quarters were arranged around a sunken cellar courtyard, while to the extreme west, was arranged the kitchen yard. The long corridor, approximately 140' long, distancing the service wing from the main house, found precedence in early Victorian planning. Burn, for example, favoured the arrangement. There were some advantages. The kitchen at Rousdon was not only at the far end of the house, approached by a right angle corridor but divided in turn from the principal corridor by folding doors, ensuring that no kitchen smells permeated the house.

The use of different levels is especially ingenious. The ground floor of the main courtyard, is at basement level, and is essentially a service area, with cloister arcade concealing the approach to the dairy, beneath the library, and to the servants' American bowling hall ¹¹⁰, beneath

the great hall. The service courtyard at the same level is discreetly approached by a descending ramp, passing in a tunnel below the drive from porte-cochère to stables.

Above all, quadrangle plans were extravagant in their use of ground, and required more walling than double piles or Palladian villas. This was probably why other architects, and later George, neglected the plan. Not surprisingly the cost of Rousdon was high, the contract, including internal completion, was for £78,000; the final figure was more likely to have been £100,000. This was unavoidable. Any reduction of the plan would have meant a correspondingly smaller main courtyard which would have been intolerably poky, a fate the existing courtyard escapes by a whisker.

Paradoxically it was George's pupil, Lutyens, who revived an interest in the plan, and used it repeatedly, although in a different way from George, making visitors cross the courtyard, in order to create a favourite effect where a narrow passage or archway, constricts the entrance, and prevents a full view of the opposite facade. The curiosity of the visitor is aroused, the impact of unexpected space heightened, as at Orchards, Overstrand Hall and Deanery Gardens.

Apart from these defects, which arise from the plan, the relationship of rooms appears to have worked satisfactorily. The Great Hall, 66' x 26' ^(Pl.23) (the first of George's medieval halls) has a minstrel gallery near to the entrance, with the part below the gallery screened off from the anterooms. With an open oak timber carried on carved stone corbels, walls panelled with wainscot to the height of the window sills and lined with local Devon dressed Beerstone, the hall has six windows each with twelve stained glass lights, depicting local historical scenes (The Armada, the Landing of the Duke of Monmouth). To avoid impersonality George and Vaughan supplied an inglenook, with oak settles and a hooded fireplace, ^(Pl.24) carved with hunting scenes reaching to the roof, a feature used subsequently, as was the long manorial window in the north-west corner of the hall.

The medieval hall contrasts with the sumptuous main staircase to the south west, executed in Italian marble with matching parapet wall and moulding coping. The marble, used freely throughout the house, was apparently salvaged from a wreck on the foreshore.

The principal rooms ¹¹¹ are arranged along the south side, taking full advantage of the sea views, and are in restrained Jacobean style

with panelling and decorative plasterwork, or beamed ceilings. George was commissioned to design the fitted furniture, ^(Pl.25)mantlepieces, bookcases and sideboards, and show him to be both sensitive to style, and competent as a furniture designer. His attention to detail throughout the house is creditable. Since the processional route to dine would have involved guests in perambulation of the corridors, and around the courtyard, George placed a picturesque ancient well, with marble curb and cover of wrought iron and copper work¹¹², to attract attention and amuse, while traversing the corridor inside.

Rousdon afforded an impressive range of modern domestic appurtenances; Zimdah's pneumatic bells; a hydraulic lift from the basement to the top of the house, to carry up coals, luggage and other impedimenta; ovens, steamers and hot plates. Steam powered pumping gear was provided to raise the water supply from a stream which ran down to the beach. To this stream, a man could be lowered down the picturesque well in the courtyard.

Reviews were favourable, any criticism was directed at the Old English flavour,

'too great a tendency towards an imitation of old building, which is going far to reduce some of our mansions to a mere farmhouse aspect',

but, continued The Builder 'we must regard this a highly successful specimen of the picturesque'.¹¹³ The domestic homeliness about the whole was pleasing,

'but should we wish to see more attempts made to combine this kind of picturesque composition with a little more of the finish of detail and dignity of expression which (even in these levelling days) we may reasonably expect to see in the gentleman's house par excellence'.¹¹⁴

Rousdon was a fine and much publicised début for George.

Rousdon Estate Buildings (1872-76) and 6-7 St Mary-at-Hill, Eastcheap, London. (1873).

George and Vaughan's work at Rousdon had begun, not with the mansion, but with various estate buildings. Indeed the 'completeness' of the scheme might be said to have been unique, since the boundaries of the estate itself were exactly co-terminous with the parish of Rousdon.¹¹⁵

'We began by building the church of St.Pancras, the schools, farm buildings, stables and lodges following on with the house'. 116

Work began in 1872 with the rebuilding of the ruined church of St.Pancras (Pls.26,27 & 28) as a combined parish church and private chapel¹¹⁷. Described by Pevsner as, 'a crazy little aisleless church,'¹¹⁸ the building lies to the west of the house. The chancel, south transept, and porch were added in 1874, when the old north transept was converted into an organ chamber, adjoining the coal vault and stokers yard. The main feature of the design was a sturdy pyramid-roofed west tower, housing a vestry, with a playful taller octagonal north stair turret, rising to a stone arched belfry with conical roof. A triple arcade combines porch with entrance to the family vault. Nesfeldian detailing appears in the flowers in the wrought iron porch gates. (Pl.29) The church has early Gothic plate tracers and James Forsyth carved the oak pulpit while Lavers, Barraud and Westlake supplied the stained glass.

The three lodges evidence the swift maturity of George's handling of the vernacular in the tradition of Nesfield and Shaw. The east and west lodges,^(Pl.30) over the entrances, span the roads, while the north lodge^(Pl.31) stands hard by the entrance pillars to the main drive. Both the east lodge,^(Pls.32 & 33) with its dramatic low sweeping roof and tall brick chimneys and the west, with its gable divided by a tall chimney, nudged by windows, have tile-hung gables. George, like Shaw appears to have been primarily concerned with the decorative possibilities of tile-hanging rather than as a means of retaining warmth. The lodges and estate buildings attracted attention, both on completion and subsequently. In his diary, Harold Peto recalls his trip to America in November 1887,

'lunched on Friday with the Webb's again when unfortunately their Architect was there, which made it awkward and stiff, they so pleased with Rousdon lodges, asked if we would design them theirs; a disagreeable game of hide and seek with the architect all day'. 119

Then in December 1887,

'I lunched with the Webbs and discussed their lodge plans and took particulars of required accommodation etc.' 120

(Mrs Webb was a Miss Vanderbilt).

The Alma Mater Schools,^(Pl.34) opposite the main gates further illustrate the decorative possibilities of the use of local materials

and Old English style. Here, a chimney stack rising from a flint and stone base, divides the gable. The plan^(Pl.34) was economical and neat. The additional provision of 'a small committee room', was on account of the school being on the confines of three parishes and therefore visited by interested clergy. The flèche above the infant school acts as a delicate foil for the chimneys and is reminiscent of that of Immanuel Church, Samaden, Switzerland (1872). Farm buildings,^(Pl.35) carpenters' workshops, smithy, slaughterhouse, kennels, dwellings for bailiffs, gardeners and other farm servants, 'bothey' for six gardeners with mess room, all show George's interest in the picturesque - old world charm did not, however, exclude modern technology, the farm had a tramway for mucking out the carthorse stables. In addition to a broad terrace walk that George and Vaughan laid out beneath the south side of the house, they also laid out, to the west, a walled garden^(Pl.36) enclosing four acres with covered entrances;^(Pl.37) the southern angles had pavilions which acted as vantage posts along the coast.

George and Vaughan designed Peek's new offices, completed in 1873, at 6-7 St Mary-at-Hill, off Eastcheap. London^(Pl.38) and along the road from the old Cannon Street offices. It was a confident, businesslike design; fulfilling perfectly, no doubt, the firm's requirements - reflecting commercial solidity with an intimation of a carefully schooled flair. A delightfully simple brick and stone facade, with fenestration unusually, but strongly articulated. The whole had a soupçon of Venetian Gothic detail.

The stone facing of the ground floor, with its two, off centre entrances, window to the right, three windows with classical pilasters to the left, created a substantial air, while square patterned brickwork beneath the windows quelled any suspicion of the mundane. On the first floor, two double windows, one on either side, a panel with the initials H.W.P. carved amidst a bowl of Queen Anne style flowers, surmount the doors and right hand window, providing a hint of the fashionable Queen Anne style George was about to adopt.

CHAPTER 2: THE PETOS, ASSOCIATIONS AND INFLUENCES

Partnership with Harold Ainsworth Peto: The Peto Family

In March 1876, precisely a year after Thomas Vaughan's death, George entered into partnership with Harold Ainsworth Peto (1854-1933), fifth son of the celebrated mid-Victorian public works and railway contractor, Sir Samuel Morton Peto (1809-89). 'It was proposed', wrote George, 'That Harold Peto, son of Sir Morton Peto, should join me, and at the age of twenty-one he became my partner and we worked together sympathetically for many years'.¹ The partnership lasted until 1892.

The proposal most probably came from Sir Samuel. Talented and rich, he combined a business acumen with a highly developed sense of social and professional responsibility. These virtues, so highly esteemed by the Victorians, were supported by a devout religious faith. Gladstone said of him,

'a man who has attained a high position in this country by the exercise of rare talents and who has adorned that position by his great virtues'.²

Exceptionally well connected through his family and business, with the worlds of Art, Commerce and Construction, Sir Samuel would have been in a position to know that George, an architect with a growing reputation for advanced domestic design, was looking for a partner. While forming a satisfactory arrangement for Sir Samuel, who, it will be seen, took a strong practical interest in his sons' careers, the influence of the Peto circle on George's practice cannot be over-estimated. Rich and influential, the Peto world had all the overtones of a mid-Victorian *élite* breed. It not only revealed fascinating and varied social connections but also provided a direct *entrée* into the London building world, historically through Sir Samuel, whose career in this field had declined by 1876, and contemporaneously through Harold's brothers William Herbert and Morton Kelsall Peto (Peto Bros. Builders, Pimlico, London; see Chapter 3), whose building operations, though confined to the years 1872-92 were to be of immense significance to George and Peto's pattern of practice.

Indeed, after March 1876, the scope of the practice widened dramatically, and it will be demonstrated that many commissions plainly came to George through his partner, notably the timely Peto Brothers speculation in the early 1880s in Harrington and Collingham Gardens, Kensington, London, with which George and Peto confirmed their success as domestic architects.

An examination of the family and its influence on George and Peto, reveals the quality, extent and excitement of their contribution. Sir Samuel Morton Peto's career spanned some forty years, full of incident and changing fortune. An indefatigable worker, he perfectly represented the embodiment of Victorian aspiration.

Apprenticed at fourteen to his Uncle Henry Peto, who operated a large building concern in London,³ Samuel attended evening classes in mechanical drawing and theory of construction, at the Technical School on Banner Street, Old Street Road, St Lukes. Later he had lessons in draughtsmanship with George Maddox, an architect at Furnivals Inn, Holborn. Above all, he acquired invaluable practical experience 'at the bench', carving, bricklaying and supervision of construction - experience which was soon to be needed. Henry Peto died in 1830, leaving the business to his nephews. They were: Samuel Morton Peto, aged twenty-one, who had just completed his articles; and Thomas Grissell (1801-74), first apprenticed to his uncle in 1815, and made partner in 1825. Grissell and Peto's early years were not without difficulty, they inherited the litigation surrounding Henry Peto's will and a lawsuit over the latter's involvement in the building of the Custom House, London⁴ but they tendered successfully for Hungerford Market (1832-33) and expanded rapidly into one of the country's largest building concerns during their partnership (1830-46). Works included, The Lyceum (1834), The Oxford and Cambridge Clubs (1830), The Reform Club (1836), The Conservative Club (1840) and the Nelson Column (1843). Their most prestigious building contracts were those for the Houses of Parliament begun 1839.⁵ Grissell and Peto's immense wealth, however, was the result of their moving into the wider and more lucrative fields of public works, such sums were not made out of building banks, warehouses and model dwellings. They undertook great railway contracts, such as the Great Western Railway works between Hanwell and Langley (1840), with I.K. Brunel and engineer, and a large proportion of the South Eastern Railway under Joseph Cubbit, and Paddington and Reading Stations.⁶ George Gilbert Scott was articulated to the firm.

Grissell and Peto dissolved their partnership amicably in 1846, Grissell having reservations about the necessary risks involved in large railway undertakings.⁷ During the railway boom that followed, Peto, who shared none of Grissell's scepticism, profited well from his risks and formed a second partnership with Edward Ladd Betts⁸ (1815-72),

another contractor with whom he completed railway contracts until the latter's death in 1872. Their years of partnership (1846-72) were not without incident. In 1866, the Bankers Overend, Gurney & Co. Ltd, crashed, and since Peto and Betts had taken shares in lieu of cash for the contract for the metropolitan extension of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Co., the outcome proved disastrous. A long period of inactivity followed, large contracts eluding them and after Betts's death in 1872, Peto's career closed with the modest construction of fifteen miles of the Cornwall, Mineral Railway connecting Newquay with Par and Fowey.

Elected Liberal MP for Norwich in 1847, Peto had a colourful political career. Before entering Parliament he gave evidence on the evils of the 'Truck System',⁹ the invidious system so well portrayed in Disraeli's Sybil. In 1850 'The Peto Act' was passed which allowed the devolution of the trust estate in the case of property held in trust for religious purposes or for the promotion of education as chapels, meeting houses etc., without any fresh conveyance being necessary. This was of great help to Nonconformists.

His political career was also to be interrupted. During the Crimean War, Peto shared Robert Stephenson's keen sense of national disgrace over the lack of effective transport between the port and the battlefield. As a result of Peto and Betts offering to undertake a government contract for the non-profit making Balaclava railway, Peto was forced to resign his seat, since an Act prevented MPs from being concerned in any contract for commission on behalf of the Government.¹⁰ He was honoured with a baronetcy for his personal sacrifice and later returned to Parliament in 1859 as MP for Finsbury.

Peto's involvement and interest in the Arts is exemplified by his agreeing with Henry Cole, to guarantee some £50,000 for the Great Exhibition of 1851, his action encouraged others and he was appointed one of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Exhibition. Clearly a man of adventurous and progressive spirit, he wrote in a post script to a letter dated 12 July 1850,

'Perhaps I might take the liberty of saying that I consider the success of the Exhibition would be considerably increased by the adoption of Mr Paxton's plan if it is not too costly'.¹²

Peto, above all, was a family man. In May 1831 he married his cousin Mary, the eldest daughter of Thomas de la Garde Grissell of Stockwell Common, Surrey and sister of his partner Thomas. She died eleven years later in 1842, leaving four children, Henry, Annie, Sophia and Mary. The following year, Samuel, who had been inclining increasingly towards the Baptist Church, married Sarah Ainsworth, daughter of Henry Kelsall of The Butts, Rochdale, an influential lay Baptist in Lancashire. They had ten children, Morton Kelsall (b.1845), William Herbert (b.1849), Samuel Arthur (b.1852), Harold Ainsworth (b.1854), Frank Kelsall (b.1858), Basil Edward (b.1862) and daughters, Sarah, Maude, Edith, Emily and Helen Agnes (b.1860).

At the height of his success, Samuel Morton's London address was 12 Kensington Palace Gardens, 'millionaires row'. While working on the Norwich section of the Northern and Eastern Railway in 1846, Peto bought Somerleyton House, Suffolk, which 'he reconstructed ... in a style of massive splendour and taste well befitting the ancestral oaks surrounding it',¹³ and there began a long and fruitful relationship with the people of Suffolk. Peto's philanthropic gestures were to transform not only the people of Somerleyton, but also Lowestoft¹⁴. Somerleyton, however, was sold, to Sir Francis Crossley¹⁵, when the financial clouds which were to shadow Peto's affairs in the crisis of 1866, had already appeared, making this preliminary step a wise one.

Also relinquishing the London property, the family moved several times and 'went abroad' for periods during the year. They appear to have regained a degree of prosperity, for, while Sir Samuel was abroad following the crisis of 1866, the family moved to Chipstead Place, Sevenoaks, Kent, until the autumn of 1869 when they too went abroad for three years. On their return in 1872 they lived at Cowley House, Exeter, Devon (the summer was spent at Stargrove, near Newbury). In 1876 The Hollands, Yeovil, Somerset was rented. From 1877 to 1884 they lived at Eastcote House, Pinner, Middlesex, where Sir Samuel was JP and Deputy Lieutenant. In 1885 they lived at Blackhurst, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent, until Sir Samuel's death in November 1889.

(P1,39)
 Harold Ainsworth Peto was born on 11 July 1854 at Somerleyton. Little is known of his early education but his professional training was to be much in the same practical spirit as that of his father. Sir Samuel showed a keen interest in all his children, above all he wanted

them to succeed, protesting to his eldest son, then aged fifteen,

'...my desire will be to see you in some honourable profession. You know, my dear boy, my only spring of action is great love for you and your brothers'. 16

Writing from Perth in 1869 probably either to Morton Kelsall or William Herbert, both of whom were expressing an interest in building, Peto argued,

'A building business is a very good one if a man thoroughly knows it. When I was with Mr Grissell, our ordinary business coming regularly from the large breweries and fire offices, and the work of our own connection with the architects, netted on the average £11,000 to £12,000 a year, and with only £50,000 capital engaged in that department' 17.

In directing his sons' careers, material considerations were always present. Basil Peto recalls,

'At the end of 1879, a great family debate was held with regard to my future. My mother and elder sisters, and Morton Peto were strongly in favour of my going to Cambridge and going to the Bar, and a great friend of my Father's, Mr Barber, QC, offered to take me into his Chambers as pupil. This was thought to be a rare opportunity, as he had never taken a pupil and was one of the leading QC's.

However, against this prospect Herbert Peto, who was at Gillingham Street and had the whole business of Peto Brothers now on his hands (see Chapter 3), proposed the suggestion that, if I left Harrow at once - the Christmas of 1879 - and came there, he would, as soon as I was about 21 years of age, take me into partnership as, in his view, business was the way to make money, not Law. My Father rather leaned to Gillingham Street as the proposal was almost exactly repeating what had happened in his own case...'18.

Basil concluded,

'I finally decided on the Gillingham Street offer, although I realised that it had many social and other disadvantages'. 19

It appears that the same prudence and care was exercised in the case of Harold, who began his architectural training in 1871 with J. Clements of Lowestoft and also in the workshops of Lucas Brothers in Lowestoft, the latter clearly a position secured through his father. Lucas Brothers had begun with provincial origins, but were later to run

a more spectacularly Victorian course. Charles, born in 1822, set up in business in Norwich, then joined his younger brother Thomas in developing an establishment at Lowestoft. The brothers were on the staff of Samuel Morton Peto during his London contracting years, it was they who built 12 Kensington Palace Gardens for Peto²⁰. When Peto moved into railway construction in the forties, the Lucas Brothers are thought to have taken over part of the London business²¹. Harold is also reported to have spent time in the offices of Lewis Karslake and Mortimer in 1871, at 5 Great Queen Street, WC2. In c.1874 he accompanied a group from the Architectural Association to Northern France²². In 1875 he moved to 29 Gillingham Street, Pimlico, next to Peto Brothers yard, to live with his brother William Herbert, quite possibly occupying the place left vacant by his brother Morton Kelsall; who had been in partnership with William Herbert since 1872 - 'but was not suited to business and retired after a few years with £10,000 to follow Art and study painting'.²³

In 1876, the first year of his professional life, Harold moved to 11 Great Cheyne Row, Chelsea. By 1878 he had ensconced himself at 8 Albert Place, Kensington where he remained until 1885.

Family background accounts for much in Harold Peto's character. A picture emerges of an unusually well travelled family, with a range of ages such that the children were able to seek companionship and amuse themselves within the family circle. The elder sisters Maude Crossley and Emily Peto, being 'intelligent and well educated ladies'²⁴, served as excellent examples to the younger children. As is often the case amongst such families, the children learnt to be resourceful and never to be at a loss for entertainment. Basil reported that 'Frank collected butterflies and 'my elder sisters were enthusiastic sightseers.'²⁵

Any lowering of income resulting from Sir Samuel's financial difficulties was more than adequately compensated, by the experiences gained from their having to travel abroad. In the autumn of 1869, Chipstead Place, Sevenoaks, was given up for reasons of economy and the family 'went abroad' for three years. The winter was spent at Cannes at the villa of a French protestant Pasteur, Monsieur Espinet and his wife²⁶, and the spring of 1870 at Ventimiglia and summer at Villars, above Lake Geneva. Basil recalls, 'In the summer holidays Arthur, Harold and Frank came out to join us'²⁷. During the winter of 1870-71

Lady Peto and the elder sisters went to Rome, but Helen and Basil were left with a governess in Florence, 'thought to be much too young to benefit from the historical glories of what became the capital of Italy'.²⁸ They joined their mother in Venice in the spring of 1871, hence to Lugano, Monte Generose and Le Prese, above Lake Lugano - across the Maloya Pass to Pontresina. The winter of 1871-72 was spent at San Remo and Cannes. They travelled back to England in the spring of 1872, via Cologne and Dresden. Harold recalls²⁹ having spent three months during which time he 'visited several towns in North Italy and Germany' in 1871, where he must have joined his family³⁰ on their travels.

Extensive travel abroad during their formative years doubtless sharpened the childrens' capacity both for visual appreciation and critical analysis.³¹ Socially experienced and adept, they displayed a delicate balance between a highly acute sensitivity and awareness, and a rather fierce streak of self-reliance and single-minded individuality. Harold's character was clearly moulded from this stuff - he developed an almost overriding obsession with good taste and refinement, which was to develop throughout his life - his writings, correspondence and other people's recollections of him,³² reveal an intransigence, argumentativeness and supreme self-confidence, rising almost to arrogance in some matters, contrasting with a sense of insecurity when moving in circles outside the family with whom he always maintained such close relations, both privately and professionally. The Petos all remained close companions. Through their childhood ran a rich vein of self-pollinating humour, which remained with the family all their lives. They played language games, perpetuated by Basil³³ and all had family names for one another, Harold's being 'Colonel', several letters addressed to him in this way are extant,³⁴ this mischief led to an entry in the 1885 Post Office Directory as 'Col H.A. Peto'.

Harold's highly developed sense of taste and his acquisitive nature perhaps accounts for the difficulty he felt he encountered when dealing with people - he could be impatient and somewhat intolerant.³⁵ His travel diaries³⁶ reveal something of his nature.

'one thing I shall always feel grateful to America for is, that being obliged to concentrate myself on humanity for my interests, more than one does on the Continent, it has made me feel really deeper interest in my fellows instead of only on objects. I wonder whether it will all slide back again in England'.³⁷

Insecurity was a recurrent anxiety,

'I have a growing idea that I am afraid now more than ever of clever people, I feel a constant dread of exposing how ignorant I really am and keep wondering when they will refuse to stand the imposture any longer, I feel a want of only people who are full of heart . . .'

38

Harold was indeed, fastidious and a trifle precious, Basil recalls,

'During the time that I lived at Gillingham Street 39 Harold decided to buy a mahogany double sculling boat. As one would expect from Harold's taste in such things, it had very special cushions and other such fittings and he was very proud and careful of it. We often went down to use it on Sundays and generally kept the boat at Goring, Pangbourne or Streatley. The 'White Hart' Hotel was our favourite resort. We generally had two or three friends with us and the picnic lunch on Sunday became quite well known and traditional.'

40

Harold's pursuit of perfection, which was to develop almost to the point of eccentricity pervades his diaries. Writing from Venice in September 1888,

'I feel more than ever today the priceless-ness of real works of art, all money now nearly is spent by people on such unworthy things, giving costly dinners, wearing diamonds, keeping up appearances, more houses than they should etc. and never anything to spend on a fine work of art, when it is procurable, I don't and won't care how worn my clothes are on the buses I ride on if only I can get beautiful things to live with. To me the solemn effect produced by real beauty and nobility of intention of work is so very precious. I feel a different being after examining such things.'

41

Writing from San Petronio, waiting for mass to finish, he mused,

'now one feels that the closer you can live to nature doing nothing that diminishes or dims such mental or physical perfection as is possible in your case accepting such pleasures as are readily obtainable, living with surroundings and companionships as you feel best for yourself; and with such objects of beauty as are obtainable, however inexpensive, training every sense to its highest note of delicacy and brilliancy; living steadfastly the life that seems good. pursuing all that is beautiful and incorporating it. All this must primarily be done for oneself, when you have reached a

certain point, others will surely see that there is something in living thus 'self withdrawn from vulgar cares'. More desirable than spent in scraping together money (for that is the bulk of business) or social ambitions on the one hand, or a denial and abnegation of the joys of life on the other.' 42

Collecting was his consuming passion ⁴³, evidenced by the interiors of his own houses, 7 Collingham Gardens ^(Pl.40), 9 Collingham Gardens ⁴⁴ and most clearly at Iford Manor, Wiltshire ⁴⁵ (Pl.41) which also embodied his ideas on landscape gardening. Like George, he collected both paintings and objets d'art, but built up a special collection of old English oak ⁴⁶.

The sensitive side of Peto's nature was always to the fore, he found life in London abhorrent. Writing from Spain in 1888,

'Oh how I do long to live away from London, where I can have a garden, the chief good in life, equal to books and a very few friends'. 47

and from Athens in 1891,

'Oh for freedom not to go back to the vile choking degraded town! as soon as ever I can see my way to the most modest competency I will cut it for ever'. 48

'For years I have longed for it, and to escape that to me hateful life in London. I must try to be more economical I suppose and so make it possible, though town is so detestable in my eyes that it is only possible to endure it with heaps of flowers and music etc'. 49

In 1899, Peto bought Iford Manor, Wiltshire. He had lamented in previous years,

'Oh why cannot one have everything of the finest, the finest work, the finest condition, the finest surroundings, also it is I suppose 'life' as we know it, the other exists only in our imagination, and those who have the imagination have not the means to give birth to what is in them' 50

At Iford his ideal was to be realised ^(Pls.42 & 43). The Italian garden was partly conceived by Peto as a setting for the display of statuary, which Gothic or Renaissance fragments he had collected on his travels. 51 His later designs for villas, interiors and landscape gardening evidence such interests.

After his retirement from practice with George in 1892 he developed an extensive landscape garden practice, much of the work being in the South of France.⁵² (Pls. 44, 45, 46 & 47) He had a clear vision of the Italian garden,

'The entirely subordinate place in the scheme that flowers occupy gives a breadth and quietude to the whole which is sympathetic; the picture being painted with hedges, canals and water tanks, broad walks with seats and statues and tall cypresses . . . It is difficult to understand what pleasure anyone can derive from the ordinary herbaceous border that one sees without the slightest attempt at form, and the taller plants tied in shapeless truss to a stake, and the most discordant colours huddled together'.⁵³

Iford, with its mood of nostalgic reverie was the most perfect and sensitive embodiment of Peto's nature. Harold Peto brought much to the partnership, George later recalled,

'He was not a draughtsman, but had all the feeling of an artist; and to his originality of thought, soundness of judgement and refinement of taste he added also a capacity for the conduct of affairs that cannot be divorced from the practice of our craft, with its many sides'.⁵⁴

It was a valuable combination, a highly developed sense of artistic propriety and an acknowledgement of the mechanics of business. The latter irritated Peto, but he was competent in his handling of such affairs,

'What a pull artists have, they conceive a beautiful idea, and it costs no more than the same few penniworths of paint, to realise their conception with colour of lapis on jasper as it would be if they represented the meanest materials; with an architect all is different, you are told at once that it is too costly, 'it will not realise 5 per cent on the outlay' and you must execute it, if done at all, in scagliola or some other sham'.⁵⁵

His attitude towards some clients was nothing if not frank. Having retired in December 1892 he started to sail from Cairo on Christmas morning,⁵⁶

'There is no fear of a wearisome amount of ease and delights, palling and cloying one's life; there are always sufficient set backs and vexations one cannot escape to give piquancy if it were lacking without adding the drawbacks of living at the bottom of a horsepond and vainly trying to please vulgar, exacting, nouveau riches Steinkoffs & Co'. 57

What might be construed as terseness, abruptness and occasional dogmatism in many of Peto's letters to, and dealings with clients, resulted not so much from arrogance, as from his missionary zeal for purity and excellence in taste and design. While George shared Peto's love of antiques and high quality craftsmanship, he was quite shy and might have been inclined to compliance when faced with a client. Professionally they were perfectly suited and complementary, George recalling his three partnerships remarked

'I feel that I have had a 'good time' and have been allowed to work quietly, sheltered from many of the worries that disturb single handed men' 58

The confidence and excellence of many final schemes, while emanating initially from George's pen, owe much to the personality and management of Peto. Aside from his influence on the pattern of patronage, Peto's experience and opinions added an important dimension to the partnership. The years 1876-92. in partnership with Harold Peto were to be the highpoint of George's long and prolific career.

Thomas Goode's and Early Queen Anne

The first commission illustrated ⁵⁹ under joint names was the design for premises at 17, 18 and 19 South Audley Street, Mayfair ^(Pl.48), for Thomas Goode and Company 'China and Glass Manufacturers', although the work had been secured by George sometime before November 1875 ⁶⁰, at least five months before his partnership with Peto.

Goode's premises, extant in all their splendour, hold a seminal place in George's architectural development, being his first essay in the picturesque Queen Anne style which he was to adopt so successfully thereafter. They are, moreover, remarkable in being the first example of Queen Anne in the Grosvenor Estate, where, in the succeeding decades, terraces of flats and shops were to appear in the surrounding area designed by W. D. Caroe, A. J. Bolton and Col. Robert Edis; and including flats and shops designed by George and Peto in neighbouring Mount Street (1885-90).

Not insignificant to the unique position held by the premises on both these counts, was the role played by the first Duke of Westminster (1825-99) who took an active interest in contemporary architecture, having employed Waterhouse for the gargantuan rebuilding of Eton Hall, Cheshire (1870-73), and later G. F. Bodley in the 1890s, for the nearby church at Eccleston. Having been MP for Chester, Earl Grosvenor succeeded to the Marquisate in 1869 and in 1874 was the last to be elevated to the Dukedom. He was a devotee of the new style of brick and terra cotta, inaccurately dubbed 'Queen Anne'.⁶¹ The threads of architectural progeniture which came to form the style can be traced back to the 1860s.⁶² , but by 1871 it found complete embodiment in the appositely named Red House, Bayswater, built by J. J. Stevenson and his partner of the time, E. R. Robson.⁶³ Stevenson's House Architecture, written in the Kerr, Fergusson tradition, between 1869-79 and published in 1880, was a transparent apologia for the style. E. R. Robson's appointment as architect to the London School Board⁶⁴ officially endorsed 'Queen Anne' - as it was used in G. F. Bodley's London School Board offices on the Embankment in London (1874), and for the plethora of schools designed by Stevenson, Bodley, Robson, Spiers and Champneys - which, while retaining a vestige of Gothic spirit, were above all, expressive of economy which made practicable the eager missionary aims.⁶⁵

As early as 1871, the search for original motifs with which to extend the range for the richer province of house building, was leading Stevenson, Bodley and Shaw and others to the origins of the artisan mannerist domestic models, found in the street architecture of Germany and the Low Countries. (See Chapter 3).

George, who was later to make such an original contribution in this direction, was to be propelled in the direction of Queen Anne by an unlikely catalyst, in the form of the Duke of Westminster, at a particularly fertile period of stylistic gestation. George was probably a willing victim, having already shown himself receptive to stylistic experiment and there is no reason to suppose that he would not have moved independently in the direction of Queen Anne. It is however, important to establish the precise role played by the Duke, who, far from content to leave his surveyors developing his estate, wished to rescue it from drab stock brick and stucco.

At thirty-three, Thomas Goode (1794-1870) had established

himself in the china business at 15 Mill Street, Hanover Square, gradually specialising in aesthetic wares. The collecting of china and porcelain, hitherto imported from the Orient and later from Europe, was an expanding market, although at the outset the clientele was quite aristocratic. Early dealings show a variety of goods, stocked by the company, china, glassware, pottery, candlesticks, inkstands ⁶⁶. By 1844 Goode was ready to move and negotiated the lease of new premises at 19 South Audley Street, Chapel Street South, part of the Duke of Westminster's Mayfair Estate, where Goode promptly made an addition. At this time the range between South Street and Chapel Place South, still consisted of plain, small buildings. ⁶⁷

The fashionable trade increased, and in 1857 Thomas was joined in partnership by his son William James Goode (1831-92). In 1866, the lease was secured for number 18 ⁶⁸ and expanded into adjacent buildings on the north side of South Street. Expansion continued after Thomas Goode's death in 1870, and by 1875 W.J. Goode was petitioning for a new lease of his premises, all of which he held as an undertenant. So far as can be seen, Goode wished, at this stage, merely to improve the fronts, but in view of the complexity of the sites the Grosvenor Estate remained uncommitted.

Soon afterwards, the case attracted the interest of the Duke of Westminster and when in June 1875, Goode submitted an elevation which was rejected, he was told that he might receive a new lease, 'if he will build the front of the house . . . of red brick and terra cotta, and of a design to be submitted to and approved by the Duke . . . at an extra outlay'. Further advice was extended, that he should 'see the house which the Duke refers to in South Kensington'. This front was duly used as a 'model' for the revised design ⁶⁹ by George, which the Duke promptly approved, thinking it 'very good'. The house was not identified in the minutes, it could have been Shaw's 196 Queens Gate (1874-76) for J.P. Heseltine, but was more likely to have been 8 Palace Gate an arresting Queen Anne exercise by J.J. Stevenson (1873-75) which had attracted a good deal of attention. Initially, reconstruction was only scheduled for numbers 18 and 19 and work began on the rebuilding here, to George's design in August 1875.

However in July 1875 Goode had also acquired number 17 at the corner of South Street, with the intention of rebuilding at a later date. By March 1876 the fronts of numbers 18 and 19, (Pl.49) with their two equal gables were complete but George amended the design to allow for an addition of a lower gables to incorporate number 17, nevertheless retaining a similar arrangement below.⁷⁰ The perspective drawing which was shown at the Royal Academy that year, shows the old house still existing on the site of number 20 which had not yet been touched. (Pl.50)

Although the incorporation of number 17, (Pl.51) with its lower gable somewhat diffused the emphasis and symmetry of the original design, the new South Street return provided George with the opportunity of additional decoration. Notably a series of cut brick reliefs and ornaments, carved by Harry Hems, the Exeter craftsman who had worked at Rousdon. Two panels depict activities associated with hand pottery production. (Pl.52) Indeed the whole design - with its tall ribbed chimneys (those on the South Street elevation carved with sunflowers); (Pl.53) cut brick decoration, delicate wrought iron work, gables, a central entrance to the shop with self-opening door, and another offset door leading to the flats - adheres faithfully to the picturesque ideals of the Queen Anne style enjoying contemporary favour. Furthermore it was perfectly in accord with the aesthetic nature of the merchandise favoured within. Alluding directly to the trade, two niches on the front of the building contain large blue and white Nankin vases.

An unexpected, but apparently original feature on the South Street elevation, behind number 17, is a series of arches at street level, in stucco, containing a series of decorative tiles, in a Japanese style, depicting birds, butterflies and blossom panels. While the panels have a direct and justifiable relationship with the shop, trade and fashion, architecturally this feature is difficult to reconcile with the elevation as a whole.

Internally sections of the upper floors suggest that the 1875-76 rebuilding was not a complete one. The interiors of the ground floor showrooms, abound with allusions to aestheticism. Mrs Goode was apparently responsible for a series of handpainted panels featuring birds on gold backgrounds (Pl.54) - also a series of secular stained glass panels. The leather wallpaper in the rear showroom was designed by Walter Crane and entitled 'Peacocks and Amarin', produced by Jeffrey

& Co in 1878. It was a distinguished choice, having won a gold medal at the International Exhibition in Paris (1878)⁷¹. Several of the interior piers are decorated with Minton Hollins tiles (Pls.55 & 56) and Minton china featured over the showroom window in George's design of 1876, a reflection of the close ties between Goode and Minton.⁷²

In an attempt to acquire further premises in 1886, Goode considered building either on the opposite side of South Street or further south at number 16 but permission was refused.⁷³ In 1889, Minton Goode applied on his father's behalf to extend the premises northwards on the site of number 20 and 21 'in order to exhibit goods immediately after the French Exhibition'.⁷⁴ The tenant of number 22 also agreed to leave⁷⁵ and the Duke of Westminster agreed, in March 1889, to the rebuilding of the whole frontage, some thirty-six feet in Chapel Place South. George and Peto were responsible for the design, with its broad gable facing west towards South Audley Street and another north towards the Grosvenor Chapel. (Pl.57) It employed similar materials to the original but the detailing is simpler. The upper floors reflect this change in treatment, being cleverly devoted to one expansively planned house (22 South Audley Street). The interiors also mirror this simplicity.⁷⁶ Two dolphins are cut onto the chimney stack. Permission to build, from the London County Council was delayed on account of difficulties arising over the nature of the proposed 'Doulton-Peto' fireproof flooring,⁷⁷ (see Chapter 3) until March 1890.

In 1876 work continued with a design for a cottage in Wimbledon.⁷⁸ (Pl.58) More importantly, that year, George resumed his associations with Streatham, working on the vestry for Immanuel Church for the Revd Stenton Eardley⁷⁹ and the design for Trinity Presbyterian Church (now Trinity United Reform Church), originally in Angles Road (now Pendennis Road), Streatham⁸⁰ (Pl.59) The church is freely treated Geometric Gothic in style, in a quiet, light coloured brick, set off with occasional red bands of brick, reminiscent of Street, with Doulling stone dressings. An unconventional note is introduced in the form of domestic looking clerestory windows, rising out of the steep-pitched roofs of warm, red, Broseley tiles. A north-west tower was designed, but not executed, the only extant treatment to intention being the strong buttresses, carried up as far as the present roof line. The tower was to have served as a porch, providing stairs to the intended gallery

which was to have been placed opposite the pulpit. For this purpose, George and Peto treated the principal window in two heights. The upper portion of the tower and the committee room at the rear of the church, next to the minister's vestry, were thwarted by lack of funds. A great pity: for the tower, terminating with a saddle-back roof and sporting a sun dial on the southern face, would have animated the design. It must have been a disappointment to all, but especially to George, whose Venetian flavoured tower at Christ Church, Herne Bay, Kent, had suffered the same fate. Internally, ^(Pl.60) the church is of red brick and has a strong Anglican feeling, except that the chancel is lacking, which suggests that George might have been looking at work by Street. Externally Street had favoured horizontality to assist in drawing disconnected elements into a coherent whole. Internally, however, different portions began to move further apart - a path also followed by Butterfield. From the early 1860s Street had subordinated parts of double-aisled churches to others in the search for unity. Aisles were narrowed progressively until they were passages - often leading to the removal of the chancel, which had to be content with an awkward position. At Trinity Church, George dispensed with the chancel. Wide opening arches of moulded brick, supported on circular shafts of Bath stone, divide the nave and the aisles. The capitals were carved by Harry Hems, fresh from Goode's. The north end (liturgically east) has been completely rearranged, and the fittings do not appear to be by George - originally the oak pulpit was centrally placed against this end wall. At the rear of the church, George designed the committee room, minister's vestry, with lavatories etc., beneath was a heating chamber.

In 1877 the practice secured two commissions which were the first in a series of long and fruitful associations. The commencement of work on the Clandon Estate in Surrey, for the young Earl of Onslow, secured George and Peto a long-serving, aristocratic client, while the design of houses for Peter Brusey Cow in Streatham, marked the beginning of George and Peto's involvement with an issue enjoying contemporary attention, Temperance, an association which provided implications for patronage which extended much further than the successful designing of three, captivating coffee houses.

The increasingly complex nature of George and Peto's respective connections, necessitates the separate examination of these areas of work, in order to extricate and establish the precise agencies of patronage.

Temperance

It is not inconceivable that George already knew Peter Brusey Cow (d 1890), a successful manufacturer of rubber products, including the celebrated Cow Gum. Cow's activities centred around Factory Square, allegedly started as an ancient colony of Huguenot silk weavers in Streatham High Road. Had they not been acquainted they would have been introduced by the irrepressible Stenton Eardley, whose Immanuel Church and associated schools bordered on Factory Square. The relationship between Cow and Eardley was further endorsed by their mutual involvement in local affairs.⁸¹ Numbers 412-416, Hambly Houses (1877)^(Pl.61), Streatham High Road, just north of Factory Square were the first of many works that George and Peto were to design for Cow and his family.

The group, built on a site occupied during the previous century by Hambly House School, comprised a detached and pair of semi-detached houses. Though now considerably mauled at ground floor level by their conversion into shops and merging to make flats above, the group marks an interesting stage in George's development of domestic designs. Irregular in general design, with tall chimneys, gables and alternately tongued and straight tile-hanging, reminiscent of Surrey vernacular (see Clandon Estate, Surrey), the group are a more fully developed version of the Wimbledon Cottage of 1876 with its brick ground floor, simple round topped windows and tile-hung upper storey, itself reminiscent of the Northern European inspired tile-hung south service wing at Rousdon. The picturesque asymmetry, somewhat nascent at Wimbledon, achieves fuller potential in Hambly Houses, where there are more units to exploit.

Most significantly, the rear elevations^(Pl.62) offer a glimpse forward to those at Collingham Gardens, Kensington.⁸² Hambly Houses are an early rehearsal of George's concept of suburban street architecture. Internally, the provision of large staircase windows

towards the side passages, dispenses with dark corners, and was an arrangement to be employed subsequently at both Harrington and Collingham Gardens.⁸³ George and Peto's interest in good mechanical services is evidenced by the adoption of the 'Banner's System' of drainage and it was noted that, 'ventilation has been specially studied'.⁸⁴ Well established in Streatham circles, George and Peto were perfectly poised to design the Bee Hive Coffee Tavern, Streatham in 1878, the second in a series of three Temperance establishments.

It is at this juncture that several strands of patronage begin to coalesce. Sir Samuel Morton Peto had moved to Eastcote House, Pinner 1877. Numbered amongst his oldest friends was William Barber QC.⁸⁵ of Barrow Point, Pinner. Barber, a leading junior in the Chancery Division of the High Court, a Reader in Real Reform and Personal Property at Lincoln's Inn, enjoyed a highly successful practice. His wife was an accomplished geologist, classical scholar and linguist and apparently a brilliant conversationalist. Not surprisingly, their house won distinction in the 1880s as a political salon, visited by Lord Haldare, later Lord Chancellor and Henry Asquith amongst others. A local philanthropist, Barber was committed to the Temperance cause, becoming one of its most energetic supporters and it was he, doubtless via Sir Samuel, who was to commission George and Peto to design The Cocoa Tree, Pinner, their first coffee tavern.

The history of the Temperance Movement has been well documented, both in contemporary pamphlets and the journal, The Coffee Public House News (founded 1878). E. Hepple Hall's contemporary book, Coffee Taverns, Cocoa Houses and Coffee Palaces: their Rise, Progress and Prospects with a Directory.⁸⁶ is one of the most comprehensive accounts of the subject. It is necessary, however, to establish certain points regarding the intended role of the Coffee Tavern within the movement, in order to assess George's three contributions to this fashionable, but somewhat shortlived genre.

Coffee houses were nothing new, numbering 2,000 in London alone prior to 1715. They were a time honoured institution amongst Englishmen of well nigh every class, but by the end of the eighteenth century, they began to develop in different ways. The transition from coffee house to club effected quite easily at the beginning of the

nineteenth century as in the case of Brookes, Whites, Boodles, The Alfred and The Guards. At the same time, it was reported that,

'it has now become fashionable for the middle and labouring classes, as well as for the nobility and wealthy 'upper ten', to patronize their 'club' and for the former to frequent the cafés, coffee taverns, coffee palaces and coffee publics'. 87

It was the opportunities which the latter tendency afforded that arrested the attention of the Temperance Movement and led to the inception of the Reformed Coffee House or Tavern,

'owing its establishment not so much to a necessity growing out of legitimate demand for, and increased consumption of, coffee itself, as from the wisely-directed efforts of temperance advocates and social reformers generally, who recognised in the new movement a practical method of combatting drunkenness and resisting the onward progress of the drink traffic.'88

The Temperance Movement, it is claimed,⁸⁹ emanated from America, reaching this country C.1829. By the 1860s its lobby had recognised that,

'persons in the humbler walks and occupations of life, who were not habitual drunkards were often compelled to frequent the public house, because in this class of establishments above, were supplied the ordinary and natural cravings for society, such as the news of the day, and a place where they could pass a sociable hour'. 90

A viable alternative to the public house, it was decided, could be created in the Reformed Coffee House, which was to be designed to offer all the social amenities of a public house without alcohol, setting before the working man,

'for the first time, plainly on the choice between sobriety and comfort on the one hand and dissipation and wretchedness on the other'. 91

It was thought that the provision of good, cheap food, hitherto unavailable in pubs, would be an added attraction.

The Movement had begun in 1853 in Britain, with the opening of the first of a series of working mens coffee houses, in Dundee, which were, as their name implied, coffee houses plain and simple. The added dimension of overt reform came in 1867 with the opening of the first British Workman's Public House in Leeds, whose signboard exhorted,

'A Public House without the drink,
 Where men may read and smoke and think
 Then Sober Home Return
 A stepping stone this house you'll find
 Come leave your rum and beer behind
 And Finer Pleasures learn.' 92

So the campaign began in earnest, good cheap food washed down with what Charles Booth called 'sheep in wolves clothing',⁹³ ranging from botanic beer to temperance champagne⁹⁴. Clubs like that in Leeds spawned in Liverpool, Manchester and other provincial cities, particularly in the north, where the problem was felt to be most severe.

By the 1870s the Movement could boast an impressive array of celebrated and wealthy persons amongst its ranks, many of whom became clients of George and Peto. In 1874, The People's Café Company was formed in London, under the Presidency of Rt Hon the Earl of Shaftesbury, responsible for the first corporate attempt to place the Continental Café system of Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Hamburg before Londoners; its Board of Directors included Samuel Morley MP, the Nottinghamshire hosiery magnate, later a client of George and Peto. The Company aimed 'to serve as a counter attraction to the public house gin palace'⁹⁵. 'The Working Men's Club and Institute Union', founded 1862, under the Presidency of Rt Hon. Lord Lyttleton counted social reformers, Sir Harcourt Johnstone Bart. MP., Samuel Morley MP., Lord Frederick Cavendish MP, and others amongst its ranks⁹⁶.

The Coffee Tavern Company Ltd founded 1876 under the Presidency of Rt Hon. W.F. Cowper-Temple, later Lord Mount Temple, boasted Gladstone and the Duke of Westminster as vice-Presidents. His interests clearly extending beyond architecture, the millionaire philanthropist Duke became President of the Coffee Public House Association, founded 1877. Harold Peto was to design an establishment in 1880, at 36 Bow Street, Strand, for 'The Kiosk and Coffee Stall Company', of which the Duke of Westminster was President. The Kiosk, designed to serve those frequenting Covent Garden Market in the early hours of the morning, and employees of neighbouring newspaper offices. The narrow four storey edifice afforded Peto little opportunity for architectural display, but did boast electric light, 'which illuminates the interior and exterior of the house'⁹⁷.

The aims of the Movement gradually consolidated, and a whole series of pamphlets were issued, providing guidelines to ensure social and above all, commercial success to the fast proliferating establishments. A move prompted by the discovery that many taverns were incompetently managed, jeopardising the success and spread of the movement. Practical Hints for the Management of Coffee Taverns,⁹⁸ (published by the direction of the Coffee Tavern Company Limited) and The Coffee Public House How to Establish and Manage It,⁹⁹ gave endless advice on food, accommodation and management.

Many companies in considering their objectives, realised that the interior design and general appearance of the premises were of no small significance in establishing confidence; a welcoming ambience had to be engendered. Companies, however, faced several architectural problems. Firstly the unattractive legacy of the 'poor man's coffee shop'.

'It could not be doubted that the coffee house of the last half century needed reformation. A lower depth than that occupied by the poor man's coffee shop of the early Victorian era could not well be reached, without compelling public notice. Indeed, but for the extreme discomfort and the generally unwholesome and unwelcoming aspects of these shops as they were called, it may well be doubted whether the drink traffic would ever have assumed its present alarming proportions'. 100

Publicans had been quick to establish that

'coloured lamps, plate glass windows, polished mirrors, veneered counters, plush covered benches and chairs are better paying investments as public house or coffee house furniture, than smoky chimneys, flaming glass burners, leaky coal scuttles, deal topped tables and pine or even cane bottomed settees and that in order to houses of call, you must first make them attractive'. 101

Coffee houses had to compete architecturally with public houses and only by introducing

'Such things as even the commonest kind of people call for and require, could this class of establishment hold their own against the gin palace and the public house'. 102

The adapting of the style, fittings and fayre of the Tavern or Café, to the particular neighbourhood helped, but the overriding problem remained the conflicting desire to attract and reform.

Interpretations varied considerably. Dr Barnardo converted two existing public houses in the East End, the Edinburgh and Dublin Castles, retaining their flashy pub accoutrements and adapting them accordingly. Other reformers defiantly positioned their premises next to public houses.

The need for a Reformed Coffee Tavern in Pinner was incontestable, argued William Barber in The Coffee Public House News in 1878,¹⁰³ since the parish comprised a wide agricultural district, the population was scanty, averaging less than one per acre, and the number of resident gentry was exceptionally high. The proportion of the labouring classes to the entire population was small, though swelled by haymakers in the summer. Within a radius of half a mile from The Cocoa Tree, the population did not exceed seven hundred and, argued Barber, was served by eight public houses and beer shops besides others in the outlying district.

Barber's incisive mind was quick to acknowledge the importance of psychology, presentation and management. The venture was to meet the public on their own level, providing a place of entertainment which, 'depending entirely on its own attractions may compete with the public house'.¹⁰⁴ He sought to avoid three things,

- '1. the appearance of exclusiveness which necessarily attaches to a club. 2. the parade of philanthropic motives or an air of patronage which might wound the feelings or offend the prejudices of working men; and
3. the appearance of saying anything which might make them expect that he (Barber) has any higher purpose than that of catering for their entertainment.'. 105.

To ensure success, Barber felt he must initially avoid, 'the profession of any higher motive', by considering the venture a mere financial speculation'.¹⁰⁶ Seemingly a poor prospect for possible investment, Barber was shrewd enough to combat further loss through mismanagement by installing a manager and wife specially trained, the former in the taverns of the Coffee Tavern Company, the latter at the School of Cookery, South Kensington.

Recognising the importance of a good position, Barber was compelled to buy 'a larger site' than he required, 'with an old house upon it which was quite unsuited' ¹⁰⁷ to his purpose. Ever resourceful,

'By way of reimbursing myself for this superfluous outlay, I restored and fitted up part of the old building for furnished apartments, so that of my total expenditure of about £2,800, little more than one half can be fairly attributed to the coffee tavern; and this amount would have been reduced, if I had not, from a belief in the attractive power and commercial value of a pretty building, spent a considerable sum upon mere architectural display' 108

Superbly situated, adjoining the village church, at the top of the High Street, the old three storey house was altered by George and Peto in 1878 ^(Pls. 63 & 64) Whatever restrictions the incorporation of a portion of the old house exerted, George and Peto's design was a delightful recapturing of the mythical, golden age of the old English inn, replete with the external attractions of horse trough and swinging sign board. Reporting on the opening of The Cocoa Tree by Lord Ebury on 6 June 1878, ¹⁰⁹ the Harrow Gazette: was reserved,

'The building is not particularly imposing, neither can it be said to be handsome, and it is certainly not what a modern novelist might term 'magnificently ugly',

but conceded, 'the homely appearance' doubtless served 'admirably all the purposes for which it is intended'. ¹¹⁰ They were quick to admire George's characteristic chimneys,

'upon which the architect appears to have exerted all the resources of his genius and the principal stack might be made to grace a mansion far more pretensions than the one under consideration'. 111

The degree to which the accommodation reflected contemporary Temperance thinking is evidenced by its plan being illustrated in Hepple Hall's book as an exemplar in his chapter on 'Dinners, Lodgings and Amusements' ¹¹². The ground floor offered coffee room, furnished with marble tables, an open fire grate with Dutch tile decoration, fully ventilated by the Tobin System ¹¹³. An ornamental showcase aped those of public houses, displaying tobacco.

Communicating with the bar, a large kitchen, with scullery and sitting room beyond, and three bedrooms above. The Club and Newsroom, above the Coffee Room, was approached by a picturesque covered wooden staircase. On the north side of the tavern was a gravelled yard with tables and seats, beyond an old fashioned summerhouse which could be used for small parties. To the south, with separate covered approach, but attached to the tavern, was part of the restored and furnished old house, used as lodgings for families and visitors to Pinner.

Six months after the opening, Barber reported that The Cocoa Tree was becoming 'a centre of active usefulness' ¹¹⁴. A cricket club was formed with a ground in a neighbouring field, and a 'Band of Hope' with fifty children enrolled, had originated from The Cocoa Tree and had made it their headquarters for committee meetings. Improvement was not ignored, in addition to the provision of lending daily and weekly papers, a library was formed for the use of club members, at a subscription of 2s 6d a quarter. Two botany classes were held weekly ¹¹⁵ - one in connection with the South Kensington School. Average weekly takings were £11, and Barber estimated a profit of four per cent already, and anticipated six per cent in 1879. Far from being ashamed of his business, Barber reported at the opening of the Nine Elms Coffee and Reading Rooms, that he was often found behind the bar serving out coffee and that 'just now he was devoting his attention to the manufacture of plum pudding' ¹¹⁶.

Barber wrote, that

'instead of looking on The Cocoa Tree as merely a local experiment, interesting only to myself, I have no higher aim than to make its success an example and encouragement to others'. ¹¹⁷

He was not to be disappointed. The Nine Elms Coffee and Reading Rooms were one in a long succession of similar ventures springing up in London as a result of the formation of local Temperance Societies and Companies ¹¹⁸. The less salubrious the area, the greater the challenge. The opening of a Coffee Palace in 1877, by the Coffee Palace Company, in the notorious 'New Cut', in Southwark, must have been deemed a triumph.

As early as 1861, the old Georgian house standing in front of Cow's Factory Square, Streatham High Road was defiantly opened as a

'Temperance Coffee and Working Mens Lodging House'.

'One of the very red brick genteel houses of the olden time, with its red tile roof and its many squared windows and massive white sills, its elaborately carved balusters, its little front recess from the high road', 119

the premises were 'rigged up'¹²⁰ partly by William Leaf of Par Hill, partly by Charles Leaf, the former having purchased the lease and the latter having built 'a common room as an annexe'¹²¹. It served its purpose, part of which was no doubt, to keep Cows employees out of The Pied Bull Public House immediately adjoining, until 1878, when the Board of Works declared the building unsafe. Demolition was agreed as the only course of action.

Previously in 1874, the owner, S.Wilson, formerly of Streatham Common, offered the premises for sale, and the freehold had been purchased for about £1,200 by Parochial and Congregational subscriptions. The decision to demolish prompted a reconsideration of the function of the premises. The Temperance lobby felt it would be folly to build a 'mere coffee house', which might offer a solution in poor and small villages, but, they argued the requirements of each place demanded separate and practical consideration¹²². At Streatham Common there was no need to be stingy - the campaign was led by the inexhaustible Stenton Eardley, who by now a seasoned procurer of funds, had not bothered to summon a committee until £3,000 had been raised. Eardley maintained that success rested on transcending the 'nascent spasm of Temperance and social amelioration effect', he felt the addition of Club room, lodging rooms and if possible, 'the most attractive and commodious Assembly room in the neighbourhood', would secure the permanent success of the undertaking, and so this central idea would have guided the design by George and Peto. So anxious were the promoters to cater for 'wholesome recreations for the people, whether music or games, indoor or out', that had the site permitted, they intended to include a 'long cherished branch of Working Men's Baths'.¹²³

The site was long and narrow, but George and Peto made capital out of what was available. Internally, on the ground floor, besides the coffee bar at the front of the building, lit by the magnificent bay window, was a bar parlour, cloakrooms and a large lecture room at the

rear, with gallery and platform to accommodate five hundred, and a retiring room for lecturers. On the first floor was a games or club room at the front, for eighty to a hundred, behind which were the reading room and bagatelle room.¹²⁴ The kitchen at the top of the house was serviced by two lifts, heavy provisions going up in one from the basement storage area and 'chops or other light comestibles' going down in the other ¹²⁵. On the second floor, were dormitories, to be let as lodgings to working men. Eardley had made it an avowed desire from the outset, to make the house attractive to single young men, perhaps in response to Florence Nightingale's campaign within the Temperance Movement. She had written to the Duke of Westminster,

'Thousands and tens of thousands, will, I am sure, bless the Coffee House Association, especially if it could be made to include lodgings'. ¹²⁶,

Apart from the usual benefits offered by the Taverns, she claimed,

'an unmarried working-man's 'home' is what is wanted. It is quite unnecessary to point out the need that exists in many large manufacturing centres, but especially in London, for increased sleeping accommodation for the artisan and labouring classes, The extensive operations of the artisans' dwelling societies, and mechanics' building associations, everywhere 'point to the moral' of this branch of our subject' ¹²⁷

In Germany, she concluded,

'the mechanics 'lodging homes' (Herberge für Heimath) have been recognized as self-sustained institutions, 'for a quarter of a century, the first having been established in Bonn in 1854" ¹²⁸

George and Peto's design ^(Pl. 65) recreates the aspect of a quiet old red brick tavern, with its attractive bay window surmounted by wooden balcony and signboard. The design had the added recommendation of fashionable genre, although more symmetrical and simpler in decoration, it echoes Thomas Goode's premises. The Renaissance-flavoured plaster decoration in the dormers at the front and side is perhaps the first instance of an individual Old English ingredient which George and Peto were to use subsequently.

The design was not only attractive, but economical at a cost of £3,800. Eardley reported,

'It has been the opinion of all experienced persons who have examined the place, and they have been many, including practical workers in this line of all ranks, that the architects have given a great deal for the money in each of the several departments of the place, and it has been said more than once or twice that there are few Concert Rooms, though built at double the cost, either so good in style or so acoustically admirable, two points not always associated in the tasteful work even of artists so distinguished as those to whom this work has been committed'. 129.

The Bee Hive was opened on 26 July 1879 by the Lord Chancellor, Earl Cairns amidst a burst of publicity¹³⁰. His speech, according to Eardley, 'admirably appropriate, manly, sensible and practical',¹³¹ was rewarded with the presentation of George's recently published volumes of etchings, Etchings on the Mosel, (1874)¹³² and Etchings on the Loire and South of France, (1875)¹³³ for Lady Cairns.

By September 1879 Eardley was enthusing,

'Without a single advertisement a surprising number of gentlemen with their servants and children have already discovered it and availed themselves of it.

The wonderful quietude and sweet beauty of Streatham Common (which is jealously guarded by a committee of residents) induce many fathers of families to drive over and spend a summer afternoon with their children amongst its 'ups and downs' of gorse and turf and breezy joyance, many of these, availing themselves of the perfect quiet, space and cleanliness of the Beehive, for tea for themselves and their little ones, have expressed surprise both at the moderation of the charges and the excellence of the accommodation'. 134

Neither The Cocoa Tree, with the necessary inclusion of an existing house, nor The Bee Hive, with its long, narrow site, had allowed George and Peto to design an unbridled exercise in this genre.

That opportunity was to arise in 1881, when the Viscountess Ossington, sister of the Duke of Portland, commissioned George and Peto to design the Ossington Coffee Palace in Newark, Nottinghamshire, in memory of her husband, John Evelyn Denison (1800-73) one time Speaker of the House of Commons, and her nephew.¹³⁵ Viscountess Ossington was one of the wealthy mainstays of the Temperance Movement, Her husband, without any pretensions to wealth, had a private fortune, sufficient for him to refuse a retirement pension.

George and Peto's magnificent design fully justified the immense

£20,000 outlay^(Pl .66). The siting of the building is superb,^(Pl67) closing the vista of the main street, a prestigious position generally reserved by the Victorians for town halls.

If, as was thought at the time, Coffee Palaces ought to offer a range of amenities additional to those of mere reform, then the Ossington Coffee Palace must rate as the finest example of its kind - offering accommodation on an almost civic scale. It forms an elaborate embodiment of the most up-to-date Temperance thinking. On the ground floor the principal Coffee Room, with its bar extending the full 38' length of the room, was flanked by railway refreshment room style mirrors. To the right, a smaller room was 'thoughtfully'¹³⁶ provided for young people, known as the boys' room, a provision which smaller taverns were often unable to afford, though somewhat controversial. William Barber had remarked in 1879, regarding The Cocoa Tree,

'Boys, though not admitted to the Club room, should never be excluded from the public room; they are our future men and cannot too soon be brought within the range of better influences than their fathers have had'.¹³⁷

Hepple Hall did not approve, advocating that the wants of boys under eighteen, must

'be provided for in separate establishments. That grown-up people will not long patronise a house where unruly boys and children are allowed to congregate, is a fact which they who have tried the experiment have found to their cost, and the sooner the trial is abandoned the better for all parties'.¹³⁸

At Newark a happy solution to the problems of youths was provided. A bar in the corner of this room connected to the main bar by a passage under the staircase - so although connected, were effectively separate.

Accommodation for women and children had long been an issue. At The Bee Hive a large ladies cloakroom was provided, suggesting that women were welcomed. The Coffee Public House Association had remarked,

'It should be understood that men, accompanied by their wives, may occupy the women's room and every encouragement should be given to men who may be disposed to bring their wives and families to the coffee public house'.¹³⁹

and in response, rooms were specifically set aside for women in houses in Liverpool and Manchester. Surprisingly so such provision

appears at Newark.

Behind the main bar were kitchen, scullery, bar parlour for those serving and a housekeeper's room. The magnificently appointed kitchen, approached from the bar by a small flight of steps, elicited special attention in the Coffee Public House News ¹⁴⁰, mention being made of a seven foot kitchener, with large pastry ovens, hot plates, gridiron, steam cupboard for baking purposes, supplied by a steam cistern at the end. A massive table was provided for dishing up, with a lift communicating with the assembly room above.

The placing of the wide stone staircase opposite the main entrance created the feeling of a country house or private residence. Rising up the staircase the landing led to the large Assembly Room, on the left, above the coffee room and kitchen. The quantity of decoration here was well suited to a country house hall, with its exquisitely carved mullioned windows, oak dadoing and white plaster parquet work ceiling with enriched beams and matching frieze.

Intended for general use as a place for meetings, lectures and entertainments, a private staircase led to the bar and a lift to the kitchen for food. Apparently used for Thursday luncheons and concerts, farmers also met there on market days - able to survey through three splendid oriel windows the cattle market across the way. Three side windows and a balcony commanded a magnificent view across country towards Kelham.

To the right of the landing, a comfortable reading room supplied a small reference library of 'entertaining', ¹⁴¹ and doubtless improving books. Daily papers could also be read, from 'reading frames of the most approved fashion', ¹⁴² At the end of the passage, a club room with two mullioned windows and balcony, faced Castlegate.

Ascending the massive central staircase to the second floor, to the left, a beamed billiard room with modern facilities; the old fashioned seats in the recesses for spectators, creating a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere. The second floor landing led to dormitories, lavatories and bathroom and a complete suite of rooms for the manager's family and servants. The dormitories housed thirteen travellers, in 'cubicles' formed by curtains, which screened a single bed and washstand. The end fireplace heated the entire room. It was originally intended to light the building by

electricity, plans were drawn up and fittings ordered. but for some reason, probably economy, the scheme was abandoned in favour of gas.

Outside accommodation was equally lavish and up-to-date. From the public street two iron gates lead into a large yard for vehicles, while to the left of the open courtyard was a large covered carriage house with meeting room with separate entrance from the yard and connected with the kitchen for swift service - for grooms on market day. Running along the farthest end of the yard were three large stables for forty horses, with spacious loft and grooms' room.

It was, however, George and Peto's picturesque interpretation of contemporary temperance thinking, that was so captivating. The Continental café system of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Brussels, Hamburg et.al. had been ^{introduced} to London as early as C.1847 ¹⁴³, when it was felt that railway travel and commerce had awakened peoples interest in foreign ideas and fashions. The People's Café Company made the first corporate attempt at recreating the system and ambience, in London during 1874. At Newark, George and Peto, well versed in both continental habits and architecture, were quick to respond to the picturesque opportunities offered by foreign models. They arcaded the principal front, in the manner of many old houses, to form a shelter, in hot or wet weather, where tables could be placed for those who wished to take refreshment 'en plein air', in the 'café' manner. To ensure complete comfort, the arcade, which runs parallel to the footpath, was protected by iron railings and lit at night by a row of large lamps, and was sufficiently far back from the traffic of the street to have prevented unpleasant contiguity - the visitor could enjoy his refreshment under the shadow of the arcade, watching the traffic without irritation. The pièce de resistance, however, was the walled garden, modelled on the German 'Bier Garten', behind the courtyard and entered from the bar. The raised garden overlooking the Trent Bridge was carefully planted with lime trees and intersected with tile paths, provided an atmospheric background for summer evenings; music played while refreshments were served. The garden, bounded by a massive wall with sheltered arbour and oak summer house also contained a double American bowling alley 66' x 9', housed in an ornamental building. A picturesque iron gate, surmounted by a lamp formed the entrance from the street. A 65' flag post advertised the establishment.

The commemorative plaque alludes to 'A Perfect Copy of a 17th century hostelry erected in 1882 as a Temperance Hotel'. To call it a perfect copy is to render a disservice to the perfectly judged architectural conception which had undergone development. The original drawing and plan¹⁴⁴, illustrated in the Building News, 1881¹⁴⁵ (Pl.66), differs in several important respects from the extant building^(Pl.67). It had originally been intended to house only the Assembly Room and billiard room on the first floor, which externally would have had five arches and five oriel windows. At some point, plans must have been made for a more generous provision of Assembly Room, Reading Room and Club/Games Room on the first floor. The billiard rooms removal to the second floor allowed George to make capital decorative effect of the roof beams with lighting from the dormers. Externally this afforded George and Petø new possibilities. The ground floor now *displayed* a porte-cochère into the yard, adding an arch, and at first floor level an extra oriel was added, that lighting the staircase, was further invested with a differentiating section of wood decoration. To avoid this additional horizontality diffusing the overall composition, George and Petø introduced a tall chimney stack. Rising from just under the roof line, serving the dormitories at second floor level, the stack picks up the vertical note of the arcade pier to create a superbly unifying accent, which acts not only as a point of anchorage, but also as a dominant note which would have passed unnoticed had the chimney remained in its original position, rising between the dormers.

The style throughout is substantially Early English, inflected by Queen Anne and Elizabethan. The oriel windows are a general debt to Norman Shaw's Ipswich motifs but there is a strong infusion of personal detailing, the frieze under the roof line, carved balustrades and delicate ironwork.

The architects' grasp of idiom is not only competent, but perfectly suited to the architecture of ancient and historical Newark, where similar overhanging windows can be found in old parts of the town.

A magnificent finale to a movement which was to decline quickly, once it was acknowledged that,

'the tastes of the lower strata of society are so much vitiated by strong drink 'that the cup that

cheers but does not inebriate' finds little acceptance at their hands'. 146.

The companies that had proliferated so suddenly disappeared as quickly, when those who ^{were} subsidising them became disillusioned at their lack of impact. The good intentioned did leave a legacy, firstly by stimulating the growth of working men's cafés, where no attempt at reform was made and secondly, by forcing publicans to widen their range of services.

Architecturally, there remained the irony that the style employed by George and Peto, with its evocation of various types of pre-eighteenth century village or small town inn, was admirably suited to fulfil the purpose for which it was originally intended, the Public House. The Queen Anne style in particular was often revamped to serve the 'enemy' in the future.

The Cocoa Tree (now Haywood House), served as a Conservative Club ¹⁴⁷, the Bee Hive was absorbed into Cow's Rubber Manufactory Complex, ¹⁴⁸ and the Ossington Coffee Palace now houses a commercial enterprise. ¹⁴⁹

Neither George nor Peto was teetotal. They had already built Orrest Bank, Orpington for a brewer, ¹⁵⁰ and were subsequently to furnish several major brewers with houses ¹⁵¹, but association with the Temperance Movement was also to yield further commissions.

The Ossington Coffee Palace marked a high level of achievement, with its firm coherence and mastery of pictorial and planning elements. The key to the rapid development which had taken place since the first Queen Anne exercise at Thomas Goode's, lies in a series of works executed in the intervening years, from which clear lines of stylistic development unfold.

1878 marks the first of many commissions for the Morley family. Samuel Morley (1809- '86), a successful hosiery manufacturer in Nottingham according to his biographer,

'occupied a unique position as a man of business, as an organiser and leader in religious and philanthropic movements, and as a politician, who exercised an altogether exceptional influence upon public opinion, especially in Nonconformist circles'. 152

Morley and Sir Samuel Morton Peto were known to each other and shared many interests, notably Nonconformity and politics. Morley had contested, unsuccessfully, Peto's vacated seat in Parliament, as member for Bristol and was Chairman of the 'Dissenters Parliamentary Committee', promoting the return of Nonconformists to Parliament, a cause supported by Peto, Crossley and others ¹⁵³. Furthermore, Morley had been active in the Temperance Movement, since his enlistment in the mid 1850s.

Morley lived at Coopers in Chislehurst and had five sons. In 1878 George and Peto designed twelve cottages, for his son Charles, around two sides of a square in Morley Road, Chislehurst ^(Pl.70). The designs show a richening of materials and textures, with plasterwork in the apex of the dormers. One set introduced linked dormer gables while the other, formed by three linked units, took their overall shape from a single gable; both features to reoccur in George and Peto's work.

The second commission from 1878 was a house Beechwood, Kent ^(Pl.71) for the brewer Thomas Samuel Fox, for whose brother J. Woodhams Fox, George and Peto had built Orrest Bank, Orpington in 1874. The exterior, with its repertoire of varied picturesque devices, red brick, tilehanging, gables, tall chimneys and teak half timbering belies the somewhat regular plan with long axial corridor. The decoration was restrained, with brick detailing over the door and beneath the window sills and Nesfieldian/Shavian decorated coving gracing the junction between brick and tile-hanging on the principal gable.

The vocabulary of the Chislehurst cottages and Beechwood was further developed in two commissions for William Barber QC in Pinner, in 1879. The first was for eight cottages, apparently unexecuted ¹⁵⁴ (Pl.72). The variation of exterior treatment of each cottage is remarkable, considering the modest and regular plans. The horizontal emphasis was first relieved by setting three cottages at an angle. Secondly, the linked dormers of the Chislehurst group are here lowered to form the first floor, and are allowed to interrupt the roofline.

On a far more elaborate scale, was George and Peto's suggested redesigning of Barber's own house, Barrow Point, Pinner. After

purchasing the estate in 1870 from the Carr family, Barber and his steward, Philip Odell, considerably improved the existing house by adding a north wing¹⁵⁵. At some point Barber must have entertained the idea of a new house. The Building News, illustrating George and Peto's design^(Pl.73), reported that it was to occupy the site of the present house,

'A characteristic of this house is that it abuts upon the road instead of having the unprofitable front garden of a suburban villa'. 156

Unhappily, the design was not executed¹⁵⁷, but it forms a valuable intermediary between the more sober Queen Anne work, at the Bee Hive, Streatham(1878-79) and the richer mixture of Renaissance and Old English to be employed at Woodhouse, Devon (1880), and Waterside, Westgate, Kent (1880).

A dominant feature of the design was the projecting wing, with walled entrance to the road, where a tall chimney stack anchored the house to the site, and, together with the linked entrance gate, presented a screen to provide privacy from the road. The road frontage showed oriel windows with rich pargetting and small panes, evocative of Shaw's New Zealand Chambers(1871-73), indeed the Building News enthused that Barrow Point was

'equal to anything we have seen from Mr Shaw himself, but the sepia drawing, of course, adds to the picturesqueness inherent in the style and is a species of drawing we should be glad to see more largely employed for architectural purposes' 158

Internally, the road frontage was to have contained offices, porch and hall. The latter being carried up through the first floor, and lit by long bay windows above panelled walls, with a gallery running round the upper portion of the hall, leading to the bedrooms. The hall plan reoccurs at Dunley Hill, Surrey(1887-88) George's later Queen Anne country house, just as the oriels survive, in a different form, at the Ossington Coffee Palace (1881-82).

The richening of vocabulary continued with further commissions in Pinner, for Lawrence James Baker, a wealthy London stockbroker, who had acquired the Haydon Hall Estate at Eastcote, near Pinner in 1864¹⁵⁹. Haydon Hall, now demolished¹⁶⁰, was across the road from Eastcote House (also demolished)¹⁶¹, occupied since 1877 by Sir Samuel

Morton Peto. Already friends,¹⁶² the relationship was formalised when Baker's son, Lawrence Ingham, married Harold's sister, Helen Agnes Peto in 1885.

While at Haydon Hall, L.J.Baker carried out an extensive programme of improvements, employing George and Peto to design a series of cottages and a lodge.

The earliest pair of cottages, on the High Road, Eastcote^(Pl.74), date from 1879 and employ the vocabulary of those in Chislehurst (1878-79) and Pinner (1879).

George's R A drawing shows a woman scooping up a pail of water from the unfortunately named Gutts Pond at the bottom of Fore Street. The pond, since replaced by an ornamental garden, was caused by the flooding of the river Pinn which accounts for the unusual arrangement devised by George and Peto for their lodge (1880), the finest example of their Haydon Hall Estate work.^(Pls.75,76 & 77)

Built at the corner of the High Road and Southill Lane (almost opposite their cottages), it was a distinguished, detached affair, ingeniously raised on arches to avoid the fate of its predecessor which had been frequently inundated by the rising of the Pinn. Single gabled, with an effective sloping roof it cost £1,100, its expense resulting from the elaborate decoration. The porch paraded a series of caryatids carved by a local man, Hitch. Figures in British and foreign costume were represented - John Barleycorn, followed by an Irishman with clay pipe tucked into the band of his hat, a Scots bagpiper, and a Welsh woman singing. The remaining figures reveal an element of English chauvinism; an organ grinder with monkey, fur-capped man in a heavy cloak, and a third, sinister figure brandishing a flintlock. The ornamental plaster work, with its unusual figures, in the timber work of both lodge and cottages was executed by Walter Smith of Lambeth, who was to become a regular craftsman for George and Peto.

Two larger houses, both designed in 1880 complete this line of richening vocabulary of forms, combining vernacular and Renaissance detailing. Waterside^(Pl.78), Westgate-on-Sea, Kent was built for William Herbert Peto,¹⁶³ the contractors naturally being Peto Brothers, Pimlico. Westgate was to come into its own in the early 1880s when it was deemed fashionable, by the Victorians, to visit healthy,

bracing resorts. When the railway arrived in 1865, Westgate consisted of 'nothing but fields and sand dunes'.¹⁶⁴ By 1868 the sea wall, drainage system, gas and waterworks were established and houses quickly followed. C.N.Beazley is associated with much of the early development of Westgate, a plan of his, dated 1872 survives, showing an ambitious layout of terraces and squares, but as late as 1879, only two of the squares and a few villas had been built; white brick, Gothic, and a little grim. In the early 1880s Westgate was visited by a whole host of titled, fashionable people, Mr & Mrs Clementine Mitford, the Earl of Clarendon, the Marquis of Tweeddale, Lady Rose Weignall and her artist husband W.Q.Richardson, as well as Luke Fildes and family. Such people preferred the more select ambience of Westgate, to that of neighbouring Margate, fashionable in the early nineteenth century, but by 1880, considered somewhat vulgarised. The interest of the artistic and fashionable having been engaged, the Queen Anne style was soon to follow. Waterside, was in the vanguard.

Their motifs, having been well rehearsed on paper in the unexecuted Barrow Point (1879), and in practice at Pinner (1879-80), George and Peto were able to enter the resort with a confident flourish. Waterside, now a hotel, occupies a prominent site; halfway along the sea front, with good views of the cliffs, described by the Building News as 'one of the healthiest positions of this healthiest of all seaside places'.¹⁶⁵

A playful but competent arrangement of red brick, tile-hanging, oriels, bay windows and five-sided bay capped with a copper dome, Waterside presented a compact square plan, interrupted only by large bay windows towards the sea. The linked gables. with their plasterwork by Walter Smith of Lambeth, and linked windows, echo the arrangement proposed at Barrow Point.

Of significance, is the fact that Algernon Bertram Mitford built Exbury House, soon after, on the plot next to Waterside. Mitford later commissioned George and Peto to build Redesdale Hall (1887), Moreton-in-Marsh, and Batsford Park (1888-93) in Gloucestershire.

Woodhouse, Uplymme, Devon (1880), (Pls.79,80,81,82,83) for Sir George Baker, a barrister, shares features with Barrow Point and Waterside. The Builder, in contrast to the Building News, who enthused about Barrow Point, was clearly unhappy about recent development in domestic architecture, which 'seems to vary between Jacobean and Queen

Anne imitation and the style of house which an eminent Oxford aestheticist calls 'hut building'. This latter method of house architecture reaches its perfection or imperfection in such a design as that of Woodhouse, Devon, by Messrs George and Peto, where the building seems thrown together anyhow, and the gutters, flying in the air over the slopes of the lower roofs, seem as if put up before people had learned how to do such things in a workmanlike and finished manner' 166

The plan reveals a tight double pile, while externally the chimneys are grouped centrally, the house wrapping itself around them compactly. This tight arrangement, anchored by the central stacks, is a perfect response to the somewhat exposed position of the house, placed high on rising ground in one of the most attractive Coombes in the area, with a fine view over the Lyme Bay. For South Hill (later known as Yewhurst), Bromley, designed in 1881¹⁶⁷ for another QC, Sir Gainsford Bruce, MP, George and Peto returned to the simpler tile-hung idiom of The Cocoa Tree. A compact double pile, the house relies for this effect on simple brick decoration and the characteristic tile-hung upper stories.

Clandon Park Estate, Surrey. Associated Work for the Fourth Earl of Onslow

A second collection of commissions for the Earl of Onslow on his Clandon Park Estate, Surrey, form a close parallel with the work at Chislehurst and Pinner, and Onslow was to become a faithful client for whom George and Peto were to execute a variety of work, both in Surrey, and in London, until c.1895. The route of William Hillier, the fourth Earl of Onslow, to the inheritance of the Clandon Park Estate was something of a circuitous one. He was the son of George Augustus Onslow, who was the eldest son of the Honourable Thomas Cranley Onslow, brother of the third Earl, Arthur George. An only child, William Hillier (b.1853), was brought up by his mother who was widowed two years after his birth. When his great uncle died in 1870, his son having died in 1852, the estate passed to William.

Arthur George, the third Earl, a somewhat embittered man, is relevant to events, having fallen out with his father to the extent of building a house called Clandon Regis, on land in the village, to

which he made additions, intending it to be larger and more magnificent than the parental Clandon Park. After his father's death, Arthur George Onslow continued to live at Clandon Regis.

At the age of seventeen, in 1870, the fourth Earl therefore inherited the Clandon Park Estate including Clandon Park, which had lain derelict after forty-three years of neglect, and the unfinished Clandon Regis.

Undaunted by the desolation Onslow energetically set about the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the estate, chronicled in his Clandon Estate History (1870-1883).¹⁶⁸ In October 1870 he reported being able to

'get into the house at Clandon and occupied the library, and rooms immediately above it called Lady Harriet's bedroom and dressing room'.¹⁶⁹

In 1871 he employed W.A.Nesfield to 'cut vistas as advised', through the neglected parkland, and that year Onslow moved to Temple Court, an old house near the entrance of the Clandon Park Estate. Building on the estate appears to have commenced in March 1874 (after his coming of age), 'a lodge at Levylsdene¹⁷⁰ near Clandon and a row of cottages at The Warren Farm were built.¹⁷¹ In 1876, Onslow had the approach and entrance to the Clandon Park redesigned, a porch was added, and the approach embanked to enable carriages to drive up on the same level as the Great Hall.¹⁷² The following year, a proposal to

'erect a great house on the site given by the late Lord Onslow near the cemetery on The Mount Guildford'.¹⁷³

was quashed by local objectors. It is not clear whether or not George and Peto were employed in these works, but by April 1877 it is certain they had designed a cottage,¹⁷⁴ and work at Temple Court.¹⁷⁵

Temperance might again afford the clue as to why George and Peto were commissioned by the youthful landowner, certainly by 1877, possibly earlier. In 1877 the Guildford Temperance Movement were asking permission to stage activities on the estate, Onslow also had in his possession a drawing of The Cocoa Tree, dated 14 August 1877,¹⁷⁶ and by 1879, Onslow, together with Florence Nightingale, is listed as a supporter of the Coffee Tavern Co.¹⁷⁷

Work at Temple Court appears to have lasted until 1879, much of it constituting restoration and decoration, although George and Peto did build a new coachman's cottage.¹⁷⁸ A letter, addressed to Arthur H. Bowles, the agent, dated 13 September 1877 suggests that they might also have been working at Clandon Park; the tone is quite remonstrative,

'Yesterday our Mr Peto was at the above (Temple Court) and found that all the mess in the hall with the bench etc. was caused by work that you had ordered lately. The setting of the dry piece would have made no more mess than laying the tiles did in the Clandon Drawing Room. Mr Savage says he has been very much delayed by many things you have ordered lately'. 179

In conclusion, George and Peto, advise against the introduction of a drain commenting,

'It is our great aim in all our work to incur as few extras as possible as we always find our clients object to them'. 180

Work concluded in September 1879 with the coachman's cottage, but in 1883, Onslow entertained ideas of extending Temple Court, and Peto wrote on 18 April 1883 to Bowles,

'I enclose you the drawing of the wing for Temple Court which we have kept scrupulously plain and really have not spent 6d on any decorations.

It will look thoroughly businesslike and in keeping with the old house. You will be able to get on with this at once without any separate specification. The weather tiling will be constructed as the cottages Savage has built for us, without boarding and felt over the quartering. I hope you will find this about what you want. I am off to Venice the day after tomorrow.' 181

Peto combined competence in the handling of business details with sensitivity, writing on 10 May 1883,

'In the meantime do let me know what change you are making at Temple Court as I take such an interest in the Old House. If you are leaving out the two little gables, you will be spoiling the whole thing and certainly not saving £7. Onslow I am sure will be pleased to do this for the visible improvement as he drives by'. 182

On finding out the plans for the additional wing, Harold did not mince his words,

'Savage is here and has been explaining to me your proposed alterations to Temple Court.

I think you will be really, from Lord Onslow's point of view be making a mistake to do what you are proposing. 1st as regards the approach to the new wing, to make such commodious rooms as they will be, approached through such a hole and corner place as the steps over Servants' Hall, will be a great pity

As regards the arcade in front, of course it would be somewhat of a loss externally but still I do not much mind that as 2'6" or 3' overhanging with a few wooden cantilevers like at the Guildford Town Hall would not be bad'. 183

Peto also encouraged the removal of ivy,

' . . . it is all important to get this building visibly and apparently part of the main structure instead of looking as it will do like farm labourers' rooms over the stables'. 184

Early in 1878, Onslow was contemplating the building of a group of twelve almshouses. His great-great grandfather, Nathaniel Hillier had founded the almshouses for seven women in the City of London in 1801,

'under a scheme of the Charity Commissioners which I prepared for their sanction, the Trustees of Hilliers Almshouses of which I am hereditary Trustee, let the site upon which the houses then stood in the Curtain Road, Shoreditch and by selling out some of the funds, the income of which was more than counterbalanced by the rest obtained, erected and endowed 12 almshouses on a site adjoining the County Hospital at Guildford Park'. 185

George and Peto designed the almshouses (now demolished), (Pls.85 & 86) around three sides of a grass plot, 200' x 150', the longer side towards the road. The site sloped, necessitating one arm to be built at a lower level with twelve steps down. All accommodation was arranged on the ground floor since the application form stated that they were 'for poor women of not less than 45 years of age', who were 'members of the Church of England or of some Congregational of Protestant Dissenters or Methodists', preference being given to applicants who had been domestic servants who had become 'incapacitated for work'. 186

Comfortable porches, eight with carved supports like those to be used at Pinner, possibly also the work of Hitch, and four with brick

arches allowed occupants to chat or sun themselves. Each cottage was allotted a garden at the rear for vegetables, and a border in front for flowers.

The low-lying composition is assured; the horizontality superbly punctuated by a series of ten single, and two double tall, brick stacks. The drawing was exhibited at the RA in 1879, with designs for The Bee Hive, Streatham, and Barrow Point and Cottages, Pinner. Considered by the Building News to be

'exceptionally piquant examples of that simple domestic style in which Mr Ernest George has hitherto practised with so much taste and appropriate feeling and of the class to which they belong, are second to none in the Exhibition'. 187

George and Peto were to execute numerous works for Onslow on the Clandon Park Estate, as well as working on many of his London properties, but the only other published drawing was for The Lodge and Cottages, Clandon, (1883-84)^(Pl. 87 & 88). The design is confidently handled, with characteristic alternative straight and tongued tile-hanging¹⁸⁸ used at Hambly Houses, Streatham. The external quartering is more dramatic than usual, constructed in solid oak, with the tool marks showing, adzed, and not sawn or wrought, testifying to the high quality of craftsmanship and selection of materials. Peto wrote to Bowles in 1885:

'I think my letter is quite clear about the oak, I say, as I have often said before that I think oak, one year felled is not good at all, but I do not suppose it is very much worse than oak felled and used green. I am quite sure that for Estate work we should have some timber felled quite 4 yrs. It is now a good deal more than this time ago since I first mooted the point'. 189

and concerning work at Clandon Place in 1885,

'If the oak weather boarding is not very much more expensive, it would certainly look much better and last much longer. If you could get elm which would not twist much, we would be content with that'. 190

Contemporary with the work examined, from 1878, were alterations, and redecorations at 6 Grosvenor Place for Henry Campbell-Bannerman, brother of Harold Peto's brother-in-law, James Campbell^{191 (Pl. 89)}. The outer hall, dining room and library were

altered.¹⁹² The hall, painted in the Early Italian manner, with large stone chimney piece, suggesting Peto's taste, while the Renaissance decoration in the dining room, with mantelpiece and buffet executed in walnut suggest George's design, carved by James Knox of Lambeth. Mr Arthur, of Motcomb Street was the decorator and James Forsyth the stone carver and Powell and Sons painted the glass screen and windows in the outer hall.

A work of 1879 which stands aside both geographically and stylistically from that in progress elsewhere by the firm, was Kintail, on the side of Loch Duich¹⁹³ Rosshire in Scotland (Pl.90) It was designed for James T. Mackenzie, Steward of Kintail (8 Hyde Park Place, London address). Sensitive to the climate, George and Peto arranged the house around three sides of a courtyard. The design was studiously plain, creating a certain severity in the handling of the fenestration and chimneys. Skilled labour would have been rare in such a remote locality. The house, nevertheless, sported a large ballroom for the entertaining of tenants and shows the firm to be sensitive to the locality.

Contemporary with work at Waterside and Woodhouse, in 1880, alterations and additions were executed at Rawdon House, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, owned by Henry Ricardo (Pl.91) The Elizabethan House, originally owned by Marmaduke Rawdon, dates from 1622 and stands back from the road forming a courtyard with gateway to the stables. When asked to design an additional wing, George and Peto were faced initially with the difficult choice of material since the house had been ruthlessly stuccoed. The peeling off of the old cement revealed interesting brick mouldings and pilasters, and so it was decided to restore the whole house to its original red brick, and the new north-west wing was studiously matched. John Bradshaw Gass¹⁹⁴ (1855-1939), from Bolton, joined George and Peto specifically to supervise the works. The red brick, gabled idiom, resembling the source material used by George Devey for Hammerfield (1856-59); Betteshanger (1856-86), Coombe Warren (1870) and particularly Denne Hill (1871-75); is echoed faintly in George and Peto's designs for numbers 20 and 22 Harrington Gardens, Kensington, also of 1880, discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: SPECULATION AND SUCCESS

Peto Brothers, Pimlico, London SW1, Builders, 1872-92

In 1872 Samuel Morton Peto's eldest sons, Morton Kelsall and William Herbert founded Peto Brothers, Builders, a venture which would have enjoyed the wholehearted support of their father, who was only too familiar with the rich rewards such an enterprise could offer. Although the firm's operations were confined to the years 1872 to 1892, it was germane to the development of George and Peto's practice in the 1880s.

On 9 April 1872, the brothers bought premises comprising yard, house and offices at 29 Gillingham Street, Pimlico, London SW1. The extensive yard which also contained steam saw mills and workshops, stretched from Gillingham Street, along Berwick Street (now Glasshouse Street), as far as St Leonard Street (now Longmore Street, the whole area now occupied by a London Transport Bus Depot), was bought from George Smith, himself a builder.¹

Perhaps on account of their name, the firm appear to have established themselves quite quickly, beginning with commercial work.² By June 1873 they had been engaged for some months as contractors for the new St Stephen's Club building, designed by John Whichcord in a French Renaissance style, at an estimated cost of £100,000, on an oddly shaped site purchased from the Metropolitan Railway, on the corner of New Bridge Street and the Embankment.³

In 1875, the firm featured in correspondence in The Builder, concerning the construction of artificial skating floors, in which they invited the enquirer, 'Vortex' to visit Gillingham Street to see a 'floor in actual use devised by the inventor of the roller skate, Mr Plimpton'.⁴ The architect, H. Saxon Snell wrote, that, compared with the method employed by Messrs Green and King at Prince's Ground, 'the patent pitch-pine flooring manufactured by Messrs Peto Brothers is quite as good, and, when sufficiently tested, may prove to be better than the Prince's Ground Flooring'.⁵

Shortly after setting up in the partnership, Morton Kelsall Peto found himself 'not suited' to business and 'retired after a few years with £10,000, to follow art and study painting'.⁶ Herbert continued alone, undertaking in 1877, alterations to 16 Kensington Palace Gardens for Charles Barry Jnr⁷ and a block of new buildings, comprising depot, shops, offices and stabling on Purfleet Wharf, Blackfriars for Messrs Cockerell, coal merchants, to the design of

Alfred Bovill⁸. The following year, 1878 he executed warehouses and shops in Wilton Road, Pimlico to the designs of H.E.Wallis⁹ and, more importantly the annexe to the Criterion, Piccadilly, by Thomas Verity - the first of several theatre works¹⁰.

Just after Christmas 1879, Herbert, who, like his father was convinced that 'business was the way to make money, not law'¹¹ proposed that his younger brother Basil, should leave Harrow at once and join him at Gillingham Street, with the promise of a partnership at the age of twenty-one. Basil accepted, realising that there were 'many social and other disadvantages',¹² and was given £100 a year by his parents and went to live with Harold at 8 Albert Place, Kensington, London W8. Basil Peto's diary offers the most informed insight into the workings of the firm. Work began at 6.00am,

'I was allotted for bench-mate a very nice man, named Overton, who was a very good joiner. Of course, I was given all the easier parts of the different joiners' work that we made on our benches, doors, windows etc. At breakfast time each day I retired to the cashier (Ellison's) office as he did not come for about three quarters of an hour later, and I was able to toast a kipper or a sausage in front of the fire and heat tea or coffee on it. At dinner time, if I had any hot dinner, it was heated in a pudding basin on the glue-heater and about 12.30 every day one saw joiners removing the glue-pots and substituting pudding basins tied up in cloths'.¹³

The day's work ended at about 6.00pm. After about eighteen months of this apprenticeship Basil worked for nine months on buildings, 'learning something about bricklaying and masonry'¹⁴.

'The building I was on most of the time was a house in Harrington Gardens that Herbert was building - to Ernest George and Harold Peto's design, for Sir Robert Palmer Harding - the father of Kate Peto and Nellie Peto'¹⁵.

Basil was also doing 'a great deal of work' with Stonor and Sons, Quantity Surveyors who were regularly employed by George and Peto. He recalls

'in the summer of 1882, in the evenings, did a lot of overtime work at Harold's office, where he was working on a big specification for an elaborate house for his friends, the Middletons, which was ultimately never built, as the Father, old Middleton - died. However, it gave me a lot of very useful experience'¹⁶.

This indicates that Harold Peto was actively involved in designing personal commissions, and the Middleton house was likely to have been quite prestigious. Sir George Middleton had a garden laid out at his house, Shrubland Park, Suffolk, by Sir Charles Barry.

Other work executed in 1882 included the main structure¹⁷ of the Institute of Painters in Watercolours, Piccadilly, a Neo-Classical building designed for the Piccadilly Art Gallery Company by Edward Robert Robson¹⁸.

During this early period at Gillingham Street Basil attended a course of lectures on carpentry, and sciences connected with the building trade, at University College, Gower Street,¹⁹. In February 1883, with an advance of £600 from William Herbert Peto, Basil sailed on the 'Arizona' to 'America, a trip which was as much an instructional visit as a holiday'²⁰, since he stayed for the greater part of the year. With letters of introduction, including one from Titus Salt²¹, Basil visited New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Chicago. From Chicago he travelled to Montreal via Niagara. In an attempt to find a guide to take him salmon fishing, he happened

'to stumble across what I wanted when visiting the Grand Trunk Railway offices, where of course, I found everybody at that time very friendly to the son of Sir Morton Peto, who had been the actual constructor of the greater part of the system, including the great bridge over the St Lawrence river' 22.

While visiting Ottawa, Basil showed an interest in the modern mechanical services which were to fascinate Harold during his American visit of 1887-88. Basil recalled that he

'thoroughly investigated the newly built Canadian Houses of Parliament - the ventilation system was something new and clever. In winter, when they want the heat, the air there is naturally extremely dry, as it is at a very low temperature, and when it is brought in and heated it is very bad for the skin and cracks it. They therefore arranged a wonderful system under the Houses of Parliament of a network of pipes, perforated so as to make an imitation rain, through which they drew the air from outside so as to damp it all before heating it. This system of perforated pipes has been used also as a means of extinguishing fire' 23.

Thence to Newport where he 'definitely ceased the instructional side'²⁴ of his visit in favour of socializing.

'After another stay in New York and more study of American building methods, my time in America was drawing to an end. On both my first visit to New York and the last one I saw a good deal of Charles Gregory, a crucible maker and a competitor of the powerful firm of Dixons, makers of pencils and crucibles, who had always been in very close touch with the Morgans of Battersea' 25.

The visit to America not only paved the way for Harold, but also acquainted Basil with progressive techniques which he expediently exploited on his return.

At the beginning of 1884, when the firm were building 43 and 45 Harrington Gardens, Basil entered partnership with William Herbert Peto. The first new contract secured after Basil's return from America was for the London Pavilion, Coventry Street, London W1.²⁶

The old Pavilion had to be pulled down to make way for the commencement of Shaftesbury Avenue, which was to cross into St Martin's Lane, hitherto the only street running north through Seven Dials. Indeed the full story of the London Pavilion is one of a good deal of crookery and corruption²⁷. Basil recalled,

'This was a few years before the setting up of the County Councils, and London building, etcetera, was all under the Office called the Metropolitan Board of Works. By employing the Permanent Architect to this Body, as well as another architect for everyday use, much could be done and arranged with regard to new building construction'.

Villiers, the proprietor of the London Pavilion, was a past-master in such affairs. He was intensely anxious that he should be able to give his Easter Monday performance in the old house and his first performance in the new exactly six months later, - when Londoners had all come back to London from their summer holidays' 28.

Begun in May 1885, completed in September, and opened in December of that year, the Music Hall, designed by Robert J. Warley of Cannon Street²⁹ had risen at the astonishing rate of seven feet a week. 30,000 cubes of stone were quarried in six weeks and it was reported,

'The contractors to do this have kept a large staff of men employed day and night. Their steam-saws have been going constantly, in addition to about twenty hand sawyers in order to get the stone sawn ready for the men to work' 30.

The whole enterprise serves to show how receptive Peto Brothers were to new ideas. Basil recalls, the building 'by night and day' was

'quite a new sight for London, only made reasonably possible by the recent invention of electric arc lighting. The internal lighting by incandescent lamps, on the Edison principle came later.

Five huge glass globes containing the carbons, were suspended high over the building site and above the level of the three Scotch cranes, which covered the walls of the three corners of the triangle which constituted the site. I had seen Scotch cranes used in New York on buildings of moderate height, but, although they had been used for some time - as the name suggests - in Scotland for lifting masonry, those working on the London Pavilion were the first that had ever been used in London. On one or two occasions at night I added to the show by stepping on to an empty brick skip at the street level and being swung up to the scaffolding above by the Scotch crane, to save the trouble of climbing ladders' 31.

Of greater significance was the fact that the London Pavilion was the first building to be constructed using the new fireproof system known as 'Doulton-Peto' flooring, developed by Basil Peto.

'Among other thing that I had observed in America', wrote Basil,

'was their system of fire-proof flooring, made of terra-cotta blocks, partly covering the bottom flanges of the rolled iron joists, and forming a much more fire-proof floor than concrete' 32.

Since the great fire in Chicago of 1871, 'fire-proof' construction had been greatly desired in America, but as Montgomery Schuyler wrote in 1895, efforts were needed to replace immediately post fire, somewhat inferior buildings, with more durable structures.

'Naturally the rebuilders of Chicago talked a great deal about 'absolutely fireproof' construction, but as naturally they did very little about it. The necessity for immediate accommodation, at a minimum of cost, as overwhelming, and cheap and hasty construction cannot be fireproof construction' 33.

However, the terra-cotta, hollow tile system had been invented as early as 1871 and was soon adopted as the standard material for floor construction, especially in iron framed multi-storey buildings. The floors were formed by flattened arches of hollow tiles between each pair of floor beams, the tops of the arches being levelled over with plaster to form the floor surface. The use of hollow terra-cotta tile

blocks for the internal partition walls was often adapted in multi-storey buildings as a weight saving device. To maximize the fire-proofing, all the iron members were enclosed in a skin of hollow terra-cotta tiles, which, acting as an insulator, prevented the iron from buckling in a fire. Basil improved upon this system,

'and designed blocks that were shaped with a bottom flange which would meet and entirely cover the underside of the joists and these were used throughout the London Pavilion' 34.

This system was exhibited by Messrs Doulton & Co. of Lambeth at the Sanitary Exhibition at Leicester in September 1885³⁵, 1,600 square yards of the flooring was used and the system enabled the contractors to strike the centreing directly the flooring was fixed thus the wood flooring above the blocks and the plastering of the soffit could be effected simultaneously. The main girders were covered by terra-cotta soffits, pieces and side slabs, air spaces were provided so as to act as non-conductors of heat, and holes could be punched to create ventilation if required. It is interesting to note that The Builder reported,

'Messrs Doulton make no claim to have originated the principle of encasing the iron-work of a building with terra-cotta. Indeed, as our readers know, Mr Waterhouse had protected the iron girders and columns of the new Natural History Museum by encasing them with that material' 36.

The system was devised by Basil Peto not Doultons. Indeed the arrangement with Doultons had not been altogether successful,

'I, however, made an initial mistake in consulting Battersea³⁷ as to where I was to get them made and they - very naturally - recommended Doultons, who were business friends of theirs. Such work was not really in their line at all. I ought to have given it to a brick-maker. The huge cost charged by Doultons for the blocks killed the sale. The idea, however, was appreciated by another firm named Holman & Rogers, who had a similar brick of light construction made in the country, and acres (and, indeed miles) of flooring in London was done with these' 38.

George and Peto employed 'Doulton-Peto' fireproof flooring at Mount Street, Mayfair (1885-86),³⁹ and in Goode's extension in South Audley Street (1889-91), occasioning some difficulty with the Metropolitan Board of Works/London County Council respectively⁴⁰.

More importantly, throughout the 1880s George and Peto were to make a speciality of their employment of terra-cotta, much of it supplied by Doultons, in a series of designs. In 1885 they built Woolpits, Ewhurst in Surrey for Sir Henry Doulton himself⁴¹.

Soon after the completion of the London Pavilion, William Herbert Peto decided to leave the business, maintaining only his personal interest in the speculation at Collingham Gardens (to be discussed later in the chapter). Before his departure, the firm took the contract for the Fisheries Exhibition, involving,

'mainly long wooden structures, about 60 feet wide - constructed to hold the Exhibition - on the site then vacant between Princes Gate, Queen's Gate, the Natural History Museum and the road just below the Albert Hall. The design for these great tunnel-shaped sheds, which were constructed entirely of inch deal boards, - a most ingenious piece of engineering - was due to General Scott,⁴² and the buildings turned out to be so much more durable than was expected that other exhibitions were held in them in succeeding years - the next one being known as the Colinderies because the articles exhibited all came from the Colonies and India. This building also had to be done at a great speed ready to attract visitors in the summer season' 43.

The enormous quantities of wood were supplied by Penruddock-Wyndham⁴⁴, the Peto's brother-in-law. Basil, with an eye for the main chance, supplied 'a stream of exhibitors, all anxious to have lengths of counter, platform and stands, acres of green baize, show cases and all sorts of things supplied to them'⁴⁵. Since nothing had been arranged Basil persuaded his brother William Herbert that

'although it was not a builders' work, it might well be profitable and he agreed to my going ahead with it. In the fortnight before the opening of the Exhibition I had nearly 2,000 accounts, varying from 7/6d, to some hundreds; of pounds and I was there almost day and night' 46.

A second 'kind of Exhibition Building' was 'for a gentleman who suddenly blew in on a Saturday about 1 o'clock when, according to routine, the office emptied, but for myself', reported Basil,

'Everyone old enough to be trusted with the job, when we were busy, was sent off to pay the men (which was done at that time at exactly 12, noon, on a Saturday). The different clerks (including the Cashier and our Quantity Estimating Clerk) went to buildings, either selected because it was on their

their way towards their own home, or, in the case of the Manager - Earle - (a distant cousin of my Mother's) because of information he wanted to get on that particular job' 47.

The building was for Colonel Cody, 'Buffalo Bill', who Basil had met in America a few years earlier⁴⁸. Cody needed an exhibition arena for a show in the Earls Court area, and so far no preparations had been made. Basil explained that he would require first an architect or an engineer before Peto Brothers could embark upon the construction, or even the estimate. Cody knew of neither, and entrusted the whole venture to Basil,

'He (Cody) proceeded to draw on a bit of paper an oval ring, which he said would about fit the site, and which I was to understand meant tiers of seats for the audience to see the performance all round - he gave me a rough indication of the length of the arena and the width he required for the galloping ponies, for the ball shooting and Red Indian battle shows. As far as I recollect, it was all to be ready in three weeks' time. That seemed a big order, but we managed it alright by getting a sufficient strength of carpenters and our good friend, my brother-in-law Pendrudock-Wyndham, reaped a rich harvest in selling a large quantity of timber again - though not anything approaching the quantity he had supplied for the Fisheries Exhibition' 49.

After William Herbert Peto's retirement in 1887, Basil was joined by Stanley Harding, son of Robert Palmer Harding of Harrington Gardens⁵⁰, work continuing with the building of the Queen's Club, West Kensington, in January 1887⁵¹ and premises for Henry Heath, the latter in Oxford Street, to the design of John T. Christopher, in August 1887⁵² - the interiors probably designed by Harold Peto. In January 1888 they had just completed the rebuilding of The Hummums Hotel in Covent Garden for Harris Smith, the proprietor, designed and superintended by Messrs Wylson and Long⁵³. In May 1888 they built the Garrick Theatre, Charing Cross for John Hare but financed by W.S. Gilbert⁵⁴. The Italian Renaissance style theatre was designed by Walter Emden⁵⁵. In June 1889 the New Prince's Club, Knightsbridge was opened, designed by E.H. Bouchier, built by Peto Brothers. The old club had stood in Hans Place, Chelsea but had to be 'transplanted' when the area was developed in the 1880s⁵⁶.

The contract which proved to have the greatest significance for Peto Brothers, was that for the Canehill Asylum Extension, for which they tendered in 1889.

'As it was away from London, it involved arranging a big stable of cart horses, vans, carts, etc., down there and also a very complete, large canteen for the workmen employed on the job. It seemed to me a good opportunity to offer a scheme of profit sharing to all employed on the Contract. The Times newspaper took up the idea with enthusiasm and gave me the first leading article on it'. 57

An article, published 7 December 1889 outlined the scheme. The men were to receive one quarter of the whole net profits on the contract, which would be paid in addition to the wages named.⁵⁸ However, conditions were attached, 'All right to participate in the profit will nevertheless be forfeited' - by anyone earning less than a total of £5 in wages on the contract, by anyone who diminished the profits by 'neglecting their duties, misconducting themselves, wasting their time, or by joining any strike for shorter hours or for wages above the existing recognised rates of wages' . . . or by anyone who 'may do anything tending to damage the character of the firm for good and honest work'. Furthermore,

'This offer being a purely voluntary one on Messrs Peto Brothers' part, they reserve to themselves the full and absolute right to decide any question which may arise in connexion therewith, and to make any further rules or regulations that they may deem necessary from time to time. Their decision to be final and without appeal'. 59

Basil Peto recalls John Burns⁶⁰ paying a visit to the Gillingham Street yard, 'dressed in his usual blue reefer jacket and red tie'. He pushed his way into the private office,

'He came from a Trades Union he had started for General labourers, of which he was then the Secretary, to say that they had considered the proposal for profit sharing on the Canehill Contract, and he wished to give me the advice that I should drop it as the Building Trades Unions had settled that it was contrary to their interest, and were going to arrange a succession of strikes on the job and in the Works, so as to prevent their being any possibility of profit'. 61

In February 1890, The Times carried a copy of the correspondence between Peto Brothers and the London United Building Trades' Committee's (at Peto's request), in which the Union substantiated their objections. Exception was taken to the 'unreasonable and humiliating restrictions

accompanying their (Peto's), proposals', since

'Profit Sharing is neither a philanthropic nor a charitable project, but a business arrangement for mutual advantage, the success of which will entirely depend on the hearty co-operation of the workmen which Messrs Peto Brothers have made impossible by the unreasonable and humiliating restrictions accompanying their proposal' 62.

Many men, they argued were 'taken on' and through no fault of their own discharged, such men would not earn £5 and would not, therefore qualify. It was felt that Peto Brothers showed no confidence in their workmen, that it was unfair to adhere to an agreed wage since trade might improve. It was also argued that the London County Council had insisted upon the observance of 'such hours of labour as are generally accepted as fair in the trades'⁶³, any transgressions would result in forfeit of shares. Finally, it was argued, the proposal to add the forfeited shares to the shares of others would offer an inducement to the foreman (who would receive the greater amount of the profit, their rate of wages being higher), to limit the number of men who were entitled to participate and 'drive' others. The Union⁶⁴ encouraged workmen to withhold, and Peto Brothers to 'show that full confidence in their workmen which they evidently have in their own self assurance and importance'⁶⁵. The request was rejected, Peto Brothers claiming that their offer 'was made to the workmen who are, or may be employed by us on the job, we feel that it is for them to accept or reject our offer, and that it is not in our power to withdraw it, without their consent'⁶⁶.

'The Building Trades Union were as good, or better than their word! They did organise endless strikes in the works and the Joiners' Strike, which was general. I had to get a number of beds and use one of the shops as a dormitory all the week for the men who refused to obey the order to strike, but as the works were heavily picketed they could only be sent home for the weekend under strong escort of police, and we used to march down on Saturday from the works to Victoria Station with a row of policemen on each side, and a double rank heading and a rank behind the procession of our joiners. The police also kept the pickets back from the platform until the Underground trains started. But, even then, they tried to rush and jump onto the train as it moved out of the station' 67.

Their efforts to disrupt work remained successful until 11 June 1890, when,

'in the middle of the luncheon hour ... at the very moment when all the joiners' work was ready for delivery and the buildings were just ready to receive it, they lit a fire in three or four places on the stacks of timber between our cart-horse stables and the office, that got such a hold that, in the hollow site - very difficult for the firemen to work in - practically destroyed the buildings and the whole of the joiner's shops, joinery, and machinery which had been used to make it' 68.

Another works was secured and all the work had to be manufactured again with less, and inferior machinery. A year's worth of other contracts were lost while buildings and machinery were replaced, and despite insurance cover, the business was unable to recover.

Stanley Harding, while apparently knowing very little, if anything, about building, had been brought up as an accountant in his father's office, and had been a useful partner undertaking the financial aspects of Peto Brothers. Both he and Basil acknowledged the gravity of their financial situation. After the fire, in 1891, Samuel Arthur Peto⁶⁹ suggested that Basil and Stanley join the Morgan Crucible Company instead of restarting the building business⁷⁰.

Two of the last houses to be built by Peto Brothers were both to designs by Ernest George and Peto, namely 40 Berkeley Square for W.S. Salting (1891)⁷¹, and The Yellow House, Palace Court, Bayswater (1892),⁷² for Harold's friend Percy Macquoid. Basil recollected,

'But even at the time I started crucible making, I was still finishing up small contracts to help pay the running expenses during the winding up, one of which was for the Commercial Union, in reconstruction after a fire which had occurred at Wolff's Pencil Factory, which was fortunately for me - quite close to Battersea Works. Most of the winding up of the business, however, was, of course, in Earle's hands 73.

Peto Brothers were not employed regularly by George and Peto, other than for selected works in London. Waterside, Westgate-on-Sea (1880),⁷⁴ and Littlecroft, Hampshire (1884),⁷⁵ were family commissions for William Herbert Peto and Morton Kelsall Peto respectively. The only country house they built for George and Peto, was Batsford, Gloucestershire (1888-93)⁷⁶ for A. B. Freeman-Mitford.

The firm did, however, provide George and Peto with a useful entrée to the contemporary building world, and connections with their associates, notably Doultons. Their greatest significance, however, lay in their

involvement with George and Peto, in the speculative developments at Harrington and Collingham Gardens, Kensington (1880-88), developments which reveal a complex interaction of architect, builder and client.

Harrington and Collingham Gardens, Kensington, London SW7. and SW5. (1880-88).

In 1888, W.J.Loftie wrote in Kensington, Picturesque and Historical,

'Behind and beyond Cromwell Road, a little to the south and west we come across a wholly different region. It is not an inhabited country yet ten years old: but 'here' as a flippant traveller has been heard to remark 'Queen Anne has gone mad'. Street after street, and square after square are built in red brick and terra-cotta, after designs by various eminent architects of the school founded by Mr Norman Shaw, but far outstripping his views, and plunging into the wildest extravagances of what might be called eclectic art ... the architect takes features from any ancient or modern building which he thinks may look picturesque. The result is not quite satisfactory, although some of the houses - or rather palaces - in Harrington Gardens and Collingham Road are very handsome, very commodious and probably very costly. The architects too often seem to me to err, first by bringing in foreign models and secondly by forgetting that they are building not country but town houses'.⁷⁷

Between 1880-88 George and Peto designed the twenty-nine dwellings which form 20-26 and 35-45 Harrington Gardens, and 1-18a Collingham Gardens. These two developments hold a special place in the history of the London house. Representing the 'extremest point of late Victorian architectural individualism'⁷⁸, they nestle amongst acres of adequate but undistinguished housing in Kensington.

'Sir W.S.Gilbert's (house), and the adjoining groups in Harrington-gardens, were a reaction from the rather dreary South Kensington order; at the same time we were scheming houses in Collingham-gardens, etc. These were more spread in plan than the vernacular London house, while an effort was made to give them some interest externally. We have rather settled down to the conviction that the London house may be as featureless outside as a gentleman's dress clothes, while it may have rare individuality within'.⁷⁹

Specific circumstances, both practical and economic, differing from those in the country, prevailed in London, allowing architects to enjoy a certain success from about 1870 - with variations upon the theme of the Queen Anne townhouse. Clients building houses in the smarter parts of Victorian London were unlikely to be the ground landlord, if they built in the country, they would almost certainly own the freehold of the site. From this difference, much results about the background to the townhouses built by Shaw, Stevenson, Devey, George and Peto and others.

'In that age of high profits, a landowner or his representative could expect excellent returns upon his property if it lay in the path of fashionable development. Tradition allowed him to insist, even in the best districts, on a remarkably narrow street frontage, a large proportion of the surface area of each plot, covered by building and (from the 1850's) a good many storeys. As vital to his interests as his leaseholders were the builders and architects who developed his property. Upon them he relied for the regular progress in building which was essential to profit and made some speculation necessary even on the most exclusive of estates. Up till now he had relied upon them for conformity'. 80

The owners of the desirable Chelsea and Kensington estates were faced with the problem of conformity; they could continue to sanction good speculative housing, relinquishing all risks to the builders, ensuring uniform layout, but, as George pointed out,⁸¹ this formula had been overworked in areas such as the Grosvenor Estate in Belgravia, where stucco dwellings on the old London house plan had been constantly repeated. Furthermore, by the 1870's it was not only the architects who yearned for individuality in style and variation in planning, clients too, were better educated architecturally. Stylistic developments were rapidly disseminated through the weekly architectural journals, allowing clients to form their own opinions. Money was the only proviso for individuality, in town as well as country houses. Landowners were quick to recognise the advantages of courting rich clients and their architects, for they could afford high ground rents, would undoubtedly set the tone and once ensconced were unlikely to move. There were, however, inherent dangers, and estates had to safeguard against opening the floodgates to rampant eclecticism and uncontrolled individualism - and so fairly stringent sanctions were employed to safeguard the 'tone' of a salubrious area.

The facades of proposed houses were closely scrutinized as was the credit of the clients, by surveyors and management committees, for conformity to the estate norm. Many estates relied upon unofficial lists of approved architects, while others were forced to admit speculation; individuality being sometimes sacrificed for the returns elicited by faster development. Despite protestations from builders, speculative Queen Anne was quick to follow. This is clearly to be seen in the case of the Cadogan and Hans Place Estates Company, who commissioned J.J. Stevenson to design a block comprising 42-58 Pont Street as early as 1876-78. The style, which it was hoped would express individuality and prestige, soon became dull and diluted when reduplicated. This difference, between speculative and private development is encapsulated in Cadogan Square, when, in 1887, George and Peto designed numbers 50 and 52 for Col. Thynne and T.A. de la Rue, and where Stevenson built the entire south side speculatively. The flamboyance and theatricality of the former, contrast with the latter's general level of mediocrity, combined only in part with limited elements of rare variety, designed to appeal to a wide range of clients. The Queen Anne townhouse enjoyed a short-lived heyday in the late 1870s. Subsequent estate development reverted to a degree of conformity, indeed, when Stevenson came to design Kensington Court in the 1880's for a less plutocratic clientele, it had the feel of a poor man's Ernest George.

George and Peto's superbly conceived designs for Harrington and Collingham Gardens are a final flourishing of individualism. This was achieved by extending the range of the plain Queen Anne stock,

'to capture something of the competitiveness and brio of the town houses of Amsterdam and Antwerp, so exactly fitting to the mood of Victorian mercantile rivalries'.⁸²

While the earliest houses, 20-26 Harrington Gardens adhere to George and Peto's relatively reticent interpretation of the indigenous Queen Anne vocabulary, numbers 35-45, on the south side, witness the gamut of source material drawn upon, largely the great mercantile town mansions of Northern Europe, Amsterdam, Ghent, Malines, Bruges, Haarlem, Lübeck and numerous picturesque wharfsides.

The origins and development of the Queen Annes style is well documented,⁸³ its relationship with the Renaissance styles of the

Low Countries and Germany, however requires examination, in order to establish George and Peto's contribution.

Much of the impulse of the Queen Anne revival can be linked to Gothic revival thinking, but the central characteristic of the movement was, or rapidly became, a re-emphasis of the picturesque. The Building News commented as early as 1874,

'The characteristics of the style do not go very deep, and the new affection for it at this time represents an increased cultivation of the picturesque than any original convictions regarding constructional excellence'. 84

From the outset, some architectural opinion revealed a wary attitude towards the cultivation of the picturesque, anticipated in the development of the Queen Anne style. While J.J. Stevenson championed the style in a paper of 1874, delivered to the General Conference of Architects, entitled 'On the Recent Reaction of Taste in English Architecture',⁸⁵ R. Phené Spiers⁸⁶ was more cautious. He feared that inexperienced architects might adopt the Queen Anne style, and Dutch architecture in particular, enthusiastically and with unfortunate results. In a paper entitled 'Holland', delivered to the Architectural Association in 1881, Spiers warned,

'I should wish it to be clearly understood, however, from the commencement, that because I shall attempt to treat the subject this evening, and as far as lies in my power endeavour to interest you in it, it by no means follows that I am prepared to advise any of the students of the Association to make Holland their camping-ground for their summer excursions. They possess in our country and in the north of France much better material to cut their teeth upon, and it is only when they are of more mature age and experience that they should venture to visit and sketch in a country where what we call 'Queen Anne' reigns supreme'. 87

Belgian and Dutch sources, in particular, were generally considered to be difficult to handle with success. Furthermore, by 1881, surprisingly little had been published on Dutch architecture. Spiers remarked that he had 'been allowed a fair field to begin upon', since, it had been contended by many that there was no architecture in Holland.

'The guide-books omit that general summary of the architectural features which generally forms the preface to their descriptions of a country'. 88

Knowledge of original sources was indeed inadequate. Fergusson in his History of the Modern Styles of Architecture (1862),⁸⁹ had only devoted one page to Northern Renaissance work. In his revision and republication of the text in 1891, editor Robert Kerr, then in a position to comment on the progress of the Queen Anne style, was only to confirm early fears,

'Renaissance of the Flemish and German types, all called 'Queen Anne' for short, has of course been at the same time a favourite study, but with less of artistic discrimination than of admiration for the dangerous quality of quaintness'. 90

J.J.Stevenson, who might have been expected to be more enthusiastic while devoting a whole chapter of House Architecture (1880)⁹¹ to Renaissance work in Germany and the Low Countries, largely occupied himself in contesting Fergusson's dismissive assertions regarding German work of the period, somewhat surprisingly, therefore, devoting only three pages to Belgium,⁹² and one page to a discussion of Amsterdam Town Hall. The latter, Spiers felt to be 'one of the most pretentious and least satisfactory in Holland'.⁹³

In his 1881 address, Spiers contested that he had only been able to find one paper on the subject of Holland delivered by a Mr Brewer to the Architectural Association in 1876, which had merely described the cathedral of Bois-le-Duc and 'some other places in South Holland'.⁹⁴

In the same year, 1876, Felix Narjoux, a Frenchman who had collaborated with Viollet-le-Duc in writing Habitations Modernes (1875-77)⁹⁵, had written Notes on an Architect's trip to the North West of Europe,⁹⁶ which illustrated and discussed at some length, buildings in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Copenhagen. The text was translated by John Peto.⁹⁷ J. J. Van Ysendyck's Documents Classes de l'Art dans les Pays Bas du xième au xviième siècle was published by Plantin of Antwerp in 1880-81. Ysendyck

'presented the decorative arts and architecture of his period in three large folio volumes under a quite anarchic series of alphabetical headings; most of the plates were copied by collotype from engravings; but there was a scatter of large photographs, of good quality'.⁹⁸

In March 1881 an article entitled 'Dutch Architecture and the Queen Anne Style' was published in The Architect, largely in response to Spier's talk. Therein the editor pointed to the curious anomaly regarding sources,

'Last sketching season we were able to announce that some of our artistic explorers had determined to pursue their holiday rambles over the placid and fertile fields of the Hollander. This was of course, for the sake of the Queen Anne style; and no doubt it was the right thing to do'.

The editor expressed surprise however, that

'the rich country of cheese, butter, peace and cleanliness, was virtually unknown to the architectural traveller',

since

'all the while it was becoming clearer and clearer everyday that the mode of design in which we are taking our delight in current works is either Dutch or nothing'. 99

Spier's talk was considered timely, providing

'exactly what was wanted: and we can at length congratulate ourselves upon being able to look at the style of Queen Anne in the condition of what may be called - such as it is - its native beauty. It is exotic in England, as indeed almost everything architectural has been for a long time: but on the plains of Holland it is indigenous and there let us hope it may be found intelligible at last'. 100

It was not to be forgotten however, that.

'the Dutch style of the transition period in question (Renaissance) is not the only one that answered to the call of the time, but that Germany, Spain and beyond all, France, will be found to supply our students with precedents which are both much more numerous and much more ambitious'. 101

The article concluded,

'Mr Spiers seems to come to the conclusion that native Dutch architecture as a rule, is of crude, quaintly picturesque no doubt to the stranger, but accidentally rather than scientifically so. Our own modern Queen Anne work in comparison with this is too often worse instead of better, being possessed only of a conventional and histrionic, and therefore spurious, quaintness. But when in the hands of a master, of course, the effect may be and is, very different. The true picturesque is what is then cultivated; and if red brick we must have, the artist is still able to design well who cannot do otherwise'. 102

Shaw had spent a holiday in Belgium and Holland as early as 1873, George and Peto were soon to follow. Harold Peto is likely to have

travelled frequently to Belgium, in the mid 1870s to visit his brother Morton Kelsall, who, since leaving Peto Brothers C.1875 was studying painting with Pen Browning¹⁰³ and one or two others centered in Antwerp¹⁰⁴. Basil Peto recalls having visited, 'some of the old Dutch towns', with Harold, in the Easter of 1882,

'as a useful counterbalance to the modernity of the USA ... as the train went very slowly, if we saw a little town - perhaps surrounded by fine old walls, with an attractive church tower in it and picturesque-looking canals and buildings - we sometimes jumped off and spent some hours, and possibly a night there'. 105

They are recorded as visiting Haarlem, Dortrecht and The Hague.

By 1877 Ernest George must have travelled and sketched extensively in Belgium, since in that year he published Etchings in Belgium¹⁰⁶ as a companion volume to Etchings on the Mosel (1874)¹⁰⁷, and Etchings on the Loire and South of France (1875)¹⁰⁸. He comments in the preface,

'In the architecture of the Belgian cities one reads the character of a people who in the days of their power, wealth and high cultivation, felt that not only their churches, halls and belfries should have beauty and dignity, but that their dwellings, storehouses and wharves, should each have thoughtful study and appropriateness of design. The result is a sweet harmony throughout each street and canal'. 109

The towns illustrated were Bruges, Ghent, Tournai, Brussels, Malines, Antwerp, Huy, Dinant, Liège, Oudenaarde, Ypres and Louvain; the subjects were cathedrals and other churches, city walls and bridges, old houses, town halls, one or two interiors. There were also one or two plates illustrating details, such as the well cover by Quentin Matsys at Antwerp, and the carved pulpit in St Gudule in Brussels. P.G. Hamerton, writing in The Portfolio remarked,

'After looking through Mr George's two previous volumes, I think that the present publication is fully equal to them in the treatment of picturesque houses, and that it has made a step in advance when dealing with nobler architecture'. 110

By the time they came to design Harrington and Collingham Gardens, George and Peto had travelled extensively in Germany, Switzerland, France, Belgium and Holland, and George's sketches point to many of the sources drawn upon for the designs of the houses.

Like the Flemish and German Renaissance street fronts which they imitate,

'the restless outline and varying materials of the houses hint that they were erected in casual but emulous sequence by individuals'. 111

Somewhat surprisingly, however, they belong firmly to the tradition of organised speculative development. Although several houses in Harrington Gardens were built for special clients, both schemes owe their success to well tried methods of collaboration between estate owner, builder and architect and,

'exhibit as many underlying qualities of uniformity as they do superficial signs of variety'. 112

Development started in Harrington Gardens on the Alexander Estate. In 1874 John Spicer, one of the old established and 'conscientious' builders¹¹³ who had operated throughout the 1860s on the Gunter Estate in Earls Court, agreed with H.B.Alexander to develop a large piece of land mainly on the south side of Harrington Gardens. This plan envisaged continuous development along the road's south side, west of Ashburton Place. However, opposite on the north side, were to be just two pairs of houses, one at the corner with Ashburton Place and the other at the corner of Colbeck Mews. Between and behind these, on parts of some land for which another building firm (Charles and William Aldin), had made a similar agreement. A communal garden was to serve tenants on both sides of the street, since the Gunter Estate abutted close behind the intended houses on the south side, and no garden there could be guaranteed.¹¹⁴

By March 1880, neither Spicer nor the Aldins, had made any progress with their takes west of Ashburton Place; they were afforded extensions, but must have acknowledged the need for development here. Later that year new agreements were drawn up as a first step for the houses planned on the north side (Numbers 20, 22, 24 and 26) with Robert Palmer Harding, of 88 Queens Gate; and of Harding, Whinney & Company, Accountants, who was doubtless working in conjunction with Peto Brothers, the eventual builders of these two, and nearly all the other houses in the development.

This is the first of many connections which led to convoluted cross-currents of patronage. Robert Palmer Harding (1821-93) and Edward Vaughan

Morgan (1838-1922) who commissioned numbers 20 and 22 were friends and business associates. Morgan was a Director of the Morgan Crucible Company, Battersea¹¹⁵; Harding was the firm's accountant¹¹⁶. Furthermore, they were intimately connected with the Peto family by marriage, and complex business relationships, respectively. In 1874, William Herbert Peto married Harding's daughter, Kate and in 1875 Samuel Arthur Peto married her sister Ellen Cordelia and joined the Morgan Crucible Company, later becoming a partner after Edward Vaughan Morgan's retirement. When William Herbert left Peto Brothers in 1881, he was replaced by Stanley Harding, his brother-in-law, and in 1892 after the fire and closure of Peto Brothers, both Basil Peto and Stanley Harding joined the Morgan Crucible Company.¹¹⁷

Samuel Arthur Peto leased number 24, while Arthur Ryle Harding, another Harding son, leased 26 Harrington Gardens. Harold Peto was quite probably the central agency between Peto Brothers, the architects and clients.

Numbers 20-26, agreed by Harding in 1880, having been begun by Peto Brothers to George and Peto's designs, the promoters turned their attention to the south side of Harrington Gardens. Here, they decided to build six large and ornate houses for individual clients. These (now numbers 35-45), were to be contiguous, but not arranged in a traditional formal terrace. The depth of the plot to the boundary with the Gunter Estate behind was small and this dictated the broad frontages and quite probably prompted special treatment for the facades. The first client was Walter Richard Cassels, who agreed in November 1881 to build number 35 as a speculation, together with the larger number 37, for himself. Number 35 was let to Archibald David Robertson. Cassels and Robertson were old friends from the Bombay Civil Service¹¹⁸. The two houses were erected following tenders by Stevens and Bastow. Next came number 39 for the celebrated dramatist, William Schwenck Gilbert and number 41 for Hon. Henry J. Coke of 21 Collingham Road, again both built by Stevens and Bastow. Circumstances surrounding Gilbert's commission are more elusive. He had previously lived at The Boltons, Kensington¹¹⁹. However, it was certainly Gilbert who persuaded Coke to build next door, they were old friends.

'When Mr Gilbert built his house in Harrington Gardens he easily persuaded us to build next door to him. This led to my acquaintance with his neighbour on the other side, Mr Walter Cassels, now well known for his learned work summarising and elaborately examining the higher criticism of the Four Gospels up to date, created a sensation throughout the theological world, which was not a little intensified by the anonymity of its author ... I know no man whose tastes and opinions and interests are more completely in accord with my own than those of Mr Walter Cassels. It is one of my greatest pleasures to meet him every summer at the beautiful place of our mutual and sympathetic friend Mrs Robertson on the skirts of the Ashted forest in Surrey'. 120

The last two houses, number 43 (1882-83), for Robert Owen White, of 180 Cromwell Road, Kensington, and Gestingthorpe Hall, Essex; together with number 45, for William George Logan of 9 Adelphi Terrace, a banker intimately connected with speculative building in South Kensington, were built by Peto Brothers, as investments on behalf of the clients. Number 43 was leased to William Waring of Taverham Hall, Norfolk in April 1884 and number 45 sold to and first occupied by Charles Benjamin Bright Maclaren MP, later First Lord Aberconway, who lived there from 1885 until 1900, and for whom George and Yeates were to build a villa in Cannes (1907),¹²¹ and Peto designs at 38 South Street (1919)¹²². Numbers 43 and 45 are therefore less ornate but have special plans and elevations.

While the earliest houses, 20-26 Harrington Gardens,^(Pls. 92 & 93) adhere to George and Peto's relatively reticent interpretation of Queen Anne, numbers 35-45 show the style extended to recall the great mercantile town mansions of Amsterdam, Ghent, Malines, Bruges and other picturesque wharfsides of Northern Europe. The Royal Academy drawing of numbers 35-45,^(Pl. 94) showing a varied and restless outline, elicited a vehemently aggressive response from The Builder,

'We are led to insist on the latter quality (homogeneity), in regard to the ridiculously patched-up appearance of some designs exhibited (if that can be called 'design' which seems to aim at appearing purely accidental, such as the sham antique collection of buildings called 'Harrington Gardens' with the names of architects one of whom at least ought to know better. Old streets do occasionally assume this kind of appearance of pieces of buildings in ever so many different manners all huddled together, and they

have a picturesque suggestiveness then; but to go about to make this kind of thing deliberately, is child's play'. 123

The Building News contradicted,

'The style in which this work is executed varies with each house, giving the whole a most unique appearance, more like a casual bit of some ancient city'. 124

Muthesius claimed that the houses were,

'admirably fresh in design, versatile in conception and sure in detail'. 125

Stevenson had commented when talking about the group of houses in the Brussels market place,

'Great artistic skill is needed when houses are mere tall narrow strips, like these, to give them any artistic effect'. 126

lamenting,

'We give up the attempt and make our houses by the foot run, and cut them off in lengths as required'. 127

George's frontages were necessarily broader¹²⁸, and he was quick to grasp their greater decorative possibilities they afforded.

Numbers 35 and 37¹²⁹ (Pls. 95, 96 & 97) were the first houses to be built on the south side by Stephens and Bastow after a competitive tender from which Peto Brothers appear to have been excluded.¹³⁰ Conceived as a single composition on a seventeenth century Dutch or German model, the houses stand back from the road behind handsome iron railings and cobbled forecourt, an arrangement which allowed a carriage to enter without the usual walk across the public footpath. Myrtles in tubs were provided to enliven the area. Two bulky asymmetrical wings project from a central core, with a high hipped roof. Tiers of tall casements dominate the facade, while the courtyard windows light the staircases. The interior of number 35 contains well preserved and characteristic features; turned wooden balusters and arches to the stairs, ubiquitous panelling and ornamental fireplaces. The drawing room overlooks the street from the first floor, with long mullioned windows and balcony following the precedent of seventeenth century houses which contained lofty shops or warehouses on the ground floor¹³¹, as

opposed to private houses, where the ground floor was the drawing room facing the street.¹³² On the ground floor the dining room and morning room occupy the garden front with smoking room and panelled hall on the north front.

Number 37^(Pl.98) is altogether more elaborate, and was calculated to create a fine setting for Cassel's collection of paintings. The building retains much of its original character. The arcaded porch has a surviving sgraffito panel in the enclosing side wall, depicting scenes of life in 'Merry England'. The porch ceiling, a flat segment finished in moulded panels with low relief ornament, matches that in the vestibule. The hall is moderately sized with a retiring room complete with fireplace opening out at the end opposite to the staircase. The bottom stair newel is carried up to form a post, as part of an arcade, from which arches turn either way. The oak staircase with its pierced wooden panels, incorporates beasts on the newel posts. The aesthetic red, green and gold metallic wallpaper is original, as are the painted glass panels and repousee reliefs in front of the radiators. The long drawing room, at the back on the ground floor, with its three square bays into the garden, has a rich hooded stone fireplace with an old-fashioned fire arrangement, and a lively strapwork plaster ceiling. Originally the high wood panelling was painted a grey-green colour with a green and gold paper above. The oak-panelled dining room at the front, on the ground floor, sports the family motto 'Arise La Fin' and the dolphin crest. The billiard room and library were on the first floor.

Special interest attaches to the neighbouring number 39^{133 Pl.99)} built for the dramatist William Schwenck Gilbert, who had lived since 1876 at 24 The Boltons. Legend maintains that it was the money he had made from the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta Patience produced 1881-82, that induced him to build here.¹³⁴ It was rumoured that both Gilbert and Sullivan enjoyed an income of over £20,000 a year, twice as much as Gladstone, the Prime Minister. Sullivan spent freely on entertaining, racehorses, gambling and travel, while Gilbert instructed George and Peto to build in Harrington Gardens.¹³⁵

Stephens and Barstow began building numbers 39 and 41 in May 1882. Gilbert had warned that he would move in October 1883, 'in whatever condition the premises may be'.¹³⁶ He appears adamant, writing to Mrs Sakes on 14 August 1883, that from mid October his address will be 19 Harrington Gardens, near the Gloucester Road station,

'as the neighbourhood is brand new I have had a small map printed and I hope it may assist you in finding me'. 137

He appears to have ensconced himself by November 1883 when Sir Theodore and Lady Martin and J.A.Fronde, 'seeing only open doors and workmen', 138 and thinking this the prettiest of the new houses ventured to look in and were startled to find Gilbert in occupation. Furthermore, Beatrix Potter, then living in the neighbouring Bolton Gardens, noted in her diary for Saturday 15th December 1883,

'The Dutch houses are mostly finished. Mr Gilbert's is said to contain twenty-six bedrooms with a bathroom to each (fancy twenty-six burst water pipes!) It is a very handsome house, with its marble court, but I should doubt the comfort of the little lattice windows'. 139

The facade exudes a 'hearty flamboyance', 140 unexampled in previous town houses, slightly whimsical and exactly suited to its owner. The great stepped gable, in nineteen stages, punctuated by dolphins at intervals, and surmounted by a ship, controls the broad front; the lower portion being interrupted by the staircase window, and porch. Red bricks with stone dressings were employed, and all the windows are leaded. Massive chimney stacks anchor the house on either side, that to the west being engaged to the structure of number 41. The rear elevation shows a delicate arrangement, with double storey tile-hung bays beneath an enveloping gable, and a central sundial.

Gilbert claimed descent from Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the Elizabethan sea-dog who annexed Newfoundland for Britain in 1583, and it was apparently a model of Sir Humphrey's ship that Gilbert had mounted on the apex of the gable. A visitor innocently enquiring as to whether the ship was HMS Pinafore was informed, 'Sir I do not put my trademark on my house'. 141

The porch, with its rich Renaissance carving in high and low relief, with quaint little sculptured caryatids playing music, provide one of the 'first signs of joviality which peeps out at us all over the house', 142 leads through an unpolished oak door into the vestibule. The latter, with its mosaic floor, oak panelled walls and fluted frieze, has a moulded rib plaster ceiling. To the right

an arched opening to a small waiting room partly formed under the slope of the principal stairs.^(Pl.100) To the left, cloakroom and conveniences. The oak panelled hall includes a floor to ceiling chimney piece in carved stone, fronting a Dutch blue tiled inglenook where Gilbert periodically hung his hams^{143 (Pl.101)}. In the hall window are panels of Holbeinesque painted glass, supplied by Lavers and Westlake but unfortunately the stamped poppy paper by Jeffrey & Co. has been removed. Another whimsical feature is provided by mottoes above the ground floor doors; the drawing room favoured with, 'And those things do best please me, that fall preposterously', while the dining room enjoins, 'All hope abandon ye who enter here'. The latter was originally decorated by Howard and Sons, had a wooden overmantel, and a ceiling with small gilt edged panels, between beams which rest on merrily carved corbels^{144 (Pls.102,103&104)}. The drawing room, opening out into the garden has a strapwork ceiling and hooded alabaster chimney piece to the west, sculpted after the manner of the sixteenth century, rather like those of 'the old French castles'^{145 (Pl.106)}. The panelling is of rosewood. The boudoir is at half landing level,^(Pl.107) and affords a small plaster oriel projecting into the hall. On the first floor, the billiard room with white toned panelling below red surfaced walls, (originally decorated by Howard and Sons), and Gilbert's oak panelled library-cum-study, which retains its corner fireplace,^(Pl.108) high panelling and gold leather stamped paper (originally red and gold). The radiator grills, were brass repoussée panels by J. Starkie Gardner. The library windows were double glazed,^(Pl.109) and a cupboard in the panelling next to the fireplace housed Gilbert's telephone with a direct line to the wings of the Savoy.^{146 (Pl.108)}

Happy to avail himself of modern mechanical services, Gilbert installed electric light from the outset. In July 1883, he sought an estimate from R. E. Crompton for installing swan lamps. Seventy-seven were supplied, fifty-three for flexible pendants, and twenty-four brackets (with twenty-three extra, because the filaments broke frequently)¹⁴⁷. The bracket on the landing decoratively incorporated Gilbert's initials. Power came from an eight horse power Crossley Gas engine, converted through a Crompton Burgin dynamo. Crompton's estimate is reported to have come to just over £600¹⁴⁸. In 1890, Gilbert

moved to Grims Dyke, Harrow Weald, originally built for Frederick Goodall, by Shaw (1870-72). George and Peto made alterations for Gilbert in 1890-91¹⁴⁹.

Number 41^{150 Pl.110)} built for Hon. Henry J. Coke, son of 1st Earl of Leicester, superficially joins Gilbert's with which it shares certain stylistic elements. With its frontage of only 39' it is smaller than its neighbour¹⁵¹ but accords well, despite the different levels. The decorative effect, though more modest, is nevertheless of a high standard; the brickwork, blocked stone dressings, decorative tie bars, leaded lights, triple storey porch, and arched stone balustrade to the footpath are similar. The unstepped gable, however, is broken into by a chimney. Internally, a smaller hall than Gilbert's, sports stocky posts to the oak staircase. The rear drawing room, with bay window, has a magnificently carved stone arch to the inglenook, with putti in the frieze terminated by carved pilasters at either end, with jolly faces in the ribbing of the arch.

Number 43^{Pl.111)} built by Peto Brothers for Robert Owen White, in April 1883, probably as a speculation¹⁵², is simpler in treatment than number 39, although at 48' it is almost as wide. The front is spanned by a wide gable, but differs from its neighbours in that George and Peto employed moulded brickwork in the Northern German tradition, rather than stone dressings. The casements have wooden bars rather than leaded lights, adding to the simplicity. The rear elevation differs from numbers 39, 41 and 45 with their central chimneys, having a central two-storey projection beneath a tile-hung gable, reminiscent of earlier work at Rousdon, Wimbledon and Hambly Houses, Streatham.

Internally, perhaps less highly finished than the others in the group, number 43 had an ample staircase, panelled inglenook in the hall and end-to-end drawing room.¹⁵³

The last house in the group, number 45^{Pl.112)} adopts an English, Jacobean style, and this change together with the fact that the roofline runs parallel to the street, sets it apart from its five eastern neighbours, with its wide frontage of 55'5", like number 43 it appears to have been built as an investment for William George Logan, by Peto Brothers 1882-84.¹⁵⁴

In 1883 work began on the larger but more contained project of

Collingham Gardens, a short distance to the west on Gunter Estate.

It was explained that

'the architects having received many applications for the purchase of the houses built in Harrington Gardens, which having been carried out for various clients, were not for sale, suggested to Messrs Peto Bros, the contractors, to take one of the few remaining open sites available to build a similar but more complete scheme as an investment, after the manner of those in Harrington Gardens. Some of the houses will consequently be for sale, others are built for private orders'. 155

The site appears to have become available after John Spicer's death in 1883. Spicer had agreed with Robert Gunter to build here. George wrote to an interested buyer, E.W.Oliver on 26 April 1883, concerning enquiries about 43 Harrington Gardens,

'The price asked by our Client is £11,000 and the ground rent of £2.0.0 per foot, but the latter can be brought down reducing it to but £39 a year. The house we are building for the Hon.Coke adjoining will cost about £6,000, which is of course, much smaller. We are about to build other houses in Collingham Road, looking into the gardens back and front and having a very good position.

Our client (the Gunter Estate) who has this ground is anxious that we should find clients for whom the houses could be specially arranged. Our desire is that these shall have an interesting character, all varying from another both in size and design. The whole property is leasehold.

The group of houses in Harrington Gardens adjoining the house to be sold, including those for Mr Gilbert, Hon.H.Coke and Mr Cassels, as well as the houses opposite, are all our own designs'. 156

The site was a rectangle, bounded on the east by Collingham Road, and imposed no special conditions upon the shape of the development. The houses were divided into equal groups facing east and west: the strip of ground between them was laid out as an ornamental garden, railed, but open at both ends for the use of residents. (P1.113)

Building operations appear to have run smoothly from 1883-88, stabling being erected contemporaneously on the north side of Hesper Mews¹⁵⁷. The two ranges were built from north to south, with the eastern sector slightly preceding the western. Peto Brothers were not altogether successful in securing individual clients. Only five of the nineteen houses were leased directly to clients, the remainder were leased directly to William Herbert Peto, ten of them in August

1888¹⁵⁸. There is no evidence however, to suggest that the development was not a commercial success.

The houses display similar variations in style, plan interiors and materials to those found in Harrington Gardens. Although the range of stylistic source material is not much extended, a stronger German flavour is introduced, and the picturesque variety was increased by facing some of the houses entirely with terracotta (numbers 7, 12 and 12a). Numbers 3 and 4 follow 35 and 37 Harrington Gardens, being formed around a courtyard, with extended gable wings: others numbers 1, 9 and 17 are reminiscent of 45 Harrington Gardens, exploring the Cotswold Jacobean vernacular. The majority, however (numbers 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 12 and 12a) boast, in some form or another, the tall elaborated gable which was used so effectively in 39-43, Harrington Gardens. Numbers 14, 15, 16, 18 and 18a which were conceived as a group frontage, and rise higher than their neighbours, indicate the formula generally adopted for houses in the Cadogan Square district.¹⁵⁹

(Pls. 114 & 115)
 Number 1, built in 1884, leased to W.H.Peto in 1885, was finally occupied in C.1890 when Edwin Tate (of Tate and Lyle the well known sugar firm) took up residence. On the corner of Wetherby Road and Collingham Road, it commands a good position and has three frontages, one to the public gardens and two to the street, and was described as entirely 'English in its composition and detail'¹⁶⁰. Predominantly Tudor in style, it was built of thin red brick with terra-cotta dressings, and has small straight gables and bay windows. Marble mosaic steps lead through a porch and separate vestibule into a generous 34' long hall with high oak panelling and a freize of Jeffrey's paper, beamed ceiling and stone hooded fireplace. The hall¹⁶¹ is picturesquely divided from the staircase by oak arcading; it had south facing windows and skylight with painted glass. The L-shaped drawing room, with two chimney pieces and panelled dado,¹⁶² faces south-west. The dining room and drawing room have Elizabethan parquet work ceiling and panelled wood ceiling respectively. The dining room with its broad oak chimney piece was designed with separate serving door and dinner lift into a small serving room behind, thus avoiding the necessity for food to be carried across any portion of the reception rooms¹⁶³. A secondary staircase to the first floor gave servants access to the front door, without disturbing anyone using the

entrance hall, planned to be used as a large additional sitting room or billiard room. The first floor housed library, two bedrooms and a dressing room. It was an expensive house,¹⁶⁴ with deep foundations on gravel soil. The drainage and sanitary arrangements involved the laying of all pipes outside, disconnected from the sewer and provided with an inspection chamber, ensuring a continuous flow of fresh air through the drains and soil pipes were ventilated on the Eassie principle. There was also constant water and every room was fitted with Tobin¹⁶⁵ ventilating tubes to regulate the ingress of air.

Numbers 2 and 3^(Pls. 118 & 119) were built in 1883-84, as an informal pair, both distinctly Dutch in flavour, with shaped gables and chequerwork stone dressings, casements with wooden sash bars and decorative iron ties. Number 2 has a flush facade, following original examples, while number 3 had a Victorian bay with Dutch fenestration and detailing,^(Pl. 120) originally the front gables of the house differed substantially, but at an early date number 3 was raised to allow bedrooms and its gable given much the same shape as that of its neighbour.¹⁶⁶

Numbers 4 and 5^(Pls. 120, 121 & 122) form another pair, their arrangement, with asymmetrical projecting wings and a centre set back behind mosaic paved court echoes that of 35-37 Harrington Gardens. The architectural treatment is Flemish, red brick with tracery and moulded brickwork. The arresting features are the two-storeyed, tile-hung dormers with Nuremberg style capped roofs. Internally, the dining room of number 4 was decorated originally with 'blue and silver talc wallpaper', which was one of Jeffreys most recent patterns, designed by J.D. Sedding¹⁶⁷, the room had an oak margin to the floor, with panelled dado and Elizabethan parget work.

Number 6 is the first of three houses at the northern end of the range, which display terra-cotta dressings, the details being concentrated in ornamental pilaster strips of terra-cotta between the windows. The neighbouring number 7^(Pl. 123) is of particular interest, as the second in the development to be occupied by Harold Peto. Begun in 1885, it was leased with others to W.H. Peto in 1888, and the following year Harold moved in from number 9. It is the only house on the east side to be faced entirely in terra-cotta. During Peto's time the interior was remarkable for its rich, dark panelled rooms, furnished with a collection of Peto's objets d'art, the furniture in particular betraying Peto's love of Renaissance work.^(Pls. 124, 125 & 126) The lofty sitting room, occupying a storey and a half in height, in original warehouse/shop fashion, was especially luxurious, with old stained glass in the

(Pls.127,128&129)

windows, a music gallery and antique tapestries above the panelling.

The corner house, number 8^(Pl.130) designed in 1884 for Captain George Ernest Augustus Ross, FRCS, FGS, was not built until 1885.

Distinctly German in flavour and built with thin bricks like number 1, an unusual feature was the small square balcony perched on the ridge of the roof, overlooking the garden. This 'Wemmick' like eccentricity was an observatory for the diversion of Ross.¹⁶⁸

Number 9^(Pl.131) occupying the south-west corner of the development is of special interest, being Harold Peto's original house and it is quite naturally one of the most individual buildings in the development. Built in 1883-84, it adopts the Jacobean style, which sets it apart from its neighbours. Occupying the corner site, there are three elevations, all show a well calculated variety. Interest on the south side revolves around irregular fenestration and roofs, altogether with the tall three story porch, and the interruption of the roof by the tall chimney stack which serves the inglenook in the rear reception room. The house is built of red/pink brick with stone mullions and lead lights, and there were originally thin stone slabs on the roof, (Ashton and Green's slates), 'in the manner of old Sussex houses',¹⁶⁹ provided texture to the roofs and a relief from ubiquitous red tile. The accommodation is simple; hall, two reception rooms on the ground floor, the back stairs were dispensed with completely. The interior decoration and appointments more than adequately compensated for any lack of extravagance in the plan. There were 'many good bits of German glass'¹⁷⁰ introduced into the windows, and antique tiles and panels in the hearths. The hall has an angled hooded stone fireplace with ingenuous early Renaissance style carving and Dutch tiles, the whole carried up to the low pitched oak ceiling.^(Pl.132) Original beams of timber made up the staircase arcade which has vigorous Jacobean detailing. The dining room has an attractive stone arched inglenook and the beams of the ceiling rest on carved corbels, one depicting a jester.^(Pl.133) The walls were originally covered with sixteenth century stamped and gilded leather, above an oak dado. The decoration in the drawing room was originally quite ornate, with an elaborate plaster ceiling and coving, and sandstone chimney piece (now much reduced in decoration), fitted bookcases, and shelves for displaying valuable china, lined the east walls of the room (partly removed).^(Pl.134) The house was exquisitely furnished with well selected furniture from various periods - a suitably aesthetic interior for a

friend of Percy Macquoid¹⁷¹. All the decorative ironwork was executed by Ellis and Rice¹⁷². Harold Peto lived at number 9 between 1885-89, when he moved to 7 Collingham Gardens. The treatment of number 10^(Pl.135) (now in flats), is simpler, but dramatised by the use of round arched windows on the ground floor, and bands of stonework across the brickwork of the facade¹⁷³. The single storey wing to the north of the entrance, though part of the house as built is not shown in the perspective, and was probably not at first intended. The facade of number 11, now in flats, has a strong upward thrust, engendered by tiers of terra-cotta dressed, mullioned windows, terminating in high gables, the southern one projecting to allow bay windows for the front rooms, on all floors. Its neighbour, number 12¹⁷⁴ is lower, the facade with its prominent bay window to the dining room is faced with terra-cotta and the whole surmounted by a straight gable.^(Pl.136)

Number 12A¹⁷⁵ ^(Pl.137) was designed in 1885, for William Kemp-Welch of the Red House, Campden Hill, where Peto Brothers were working in 1885, on a new stable block and other alterations¹⁷⁶. The original drawing¹⁷⁷ of 1885,^(Pl.138) shows a stepped gable covering the whole front (resembling what was built), and a capped projection to the north. Set back, to the south, is another elevation, showing balconies and elaborate arcades to the ground, first and second floors, whereas the extant design, built 1887-88, has only a simple, corbelled first floor terrace. The whole is faced with yellowish terra-cotta at the front, and brick and tile-hanging on the garden front, where the house projects further than numbers 10-12 beneath a straight gable.¹⁷⁸

Numbers 14, 15 and 16^(Pl.139) were built together, in 1886-87 and comprise a block with tall elevation necessitated by a restricted frontage. Architecturally the three imitate late seventeenth century north German street facades of Lübeck and Gdansk. Numbers 14 and 15^(Pl.140) form a pair, having cut brick details, with panels and wooden sashes; while the facade of number 16 comprises one broad bay, recessed at^(Pl.141) the sides with terra-cotta mullions and plate glass windows. Added interest was provided by decorative tie bars and detailing above the windows¹⁷⁹, Number 17,^(Pl.142) built 1887-88 and much admired by Hermann Muthesius,¹⁸⁰ had a much broader frontage compared with its tall neighbours and, like numbers 1, 9 and 10 is more English in style, with

matching straight sided gables, square porch and originally had a two storey bay to the south¹⁸¹.

Number 18,^(Pls. 143, 144 & 145) which completes the square, was originally two houses¹⁸². The site allowed three frontages, each symmetrical. The west front returns to a Dutch single gable arrangement, while on the north facade, George and Peto cunningly employed vertical accents, in the form of four-storey projections housing the porches - accented with strong quoins which alternate with the brickwork on all the angles. In idiom, late seventeenth century Dutch, the houses create a dominant note perfectly suited to the corner position in the development. Muthesius remarked,

'Compared with the strict practicality and the often puritanical plainness to which one is accustomed in other English buildings, the dominant mood of these houses is almost romantic, fantastic.' 183

Careful attention was paid to the rear elevations^(Pl. 113). They were simple, quite often symmetrical and unencumbered with outbuildings and often brought together under a single gable. George and Peto introduced a whole range of tile and slate-hanging and at Collingham Gardens particularly, the contrast between red facing bricks and London stock perform the function supplied by ornament to the front. At Harrington Gardens the chimney stack is used as a picturesque feature, occupying a central position in numbers 39, 41 and 45, and offcentre at number 43. All the rears have varied bays.

Gilbert's house, as might be expected, evidenced a particularly delicate treatment. A broad, red gable undisturbed by delicate detailing, surmounts the garden front, with two square bays at either side of its base. The picturesque effect created by the fenestration was further enhanced by a light, wrought-iron framing, which supported the awning to the mosaic floored area below, with the door into the drawing room placed centrally.

The style and architectural configuration, at first sight a picturesque assemblage of vernacular motifs from all over Northern Europe, fall on examination into a narrow range of effects associated with the Victorian domestic revival employed by contemporary practitioners, red brick or terra-cotta facings, large bays, chimneys and gables, wood framed casements, leaded lights and high tiled roofs.

The success of the houses, externally, lay in their possessing individual characteristics, in some cases with a particular client in mind, but nevertheless contributing to a coherent scheme despite their variety.

Internally, George and Peto sought to avoid the general orthodoxy of the upper class house plan of the time, by means of varied formulae. Square in plan, therefore avoiding the long passages which often served town houses, 20-26, Harrington Gardens had square halls with dining room, library and drawing room on the ground floor, the smaller pair (numbers 24, 26), had billiard rooms in the basement, (Pls. 146 & 147) while those of numbers 20 and 22 were housed in the attics, behind principal gables, with arched ceilings and approached by the main stairs, this separate from the attics or servants quarters serviced by the back stairs¹⁸⁴. At numbers 35 and 37, the drawing rooms were at first floor level, but in general, the broad gabled style of the house made the upper rooms less important than the lower ones.

Collingham Gardens were deliberately 'more spread in plan than the vernacular London town house',¹⁸⁵ and so offer a slightly wider variety of plans. Some houses, like number 1, with its 34' square hall, are as generous as those in Harrington Gardens, while others are smaller. Harold Peto's house, number 9, dispenses with back stairs and had only two reception rooms, while some of the later houses, number 14, for instance, are noticeably simpler, and perhaps never enjoyed such a high degree of internal furnishing as their neighbours.

Numbers 4 and 5 in particular have unusual plans. At number 4 a low ante hall and library were beneath the drawing, dining and morning rooms which occupied an intermediate level at the back. The front portico of the house, on the ground floor, was kept low, being occupied by the smoking room and vestibule, which enabled the fine drawing room to be approached with only a twelve-step difference of level from the dining room. A well-lit back staircase gave an independent entrance to the dining room so that the meal did not have to cross any portion of the reception area on its way from the kitchen. At number 5, a much larger house, partly because of an extra low wing to the north, was planned with split levels, the drawing room being this time at the back with an upsided end on the back half landing. In November 1887, Peto remarked. on his visit to Washington,

'Have seen several houses here of a plan I always fancied for town work, with low ground storey (about 8') devoted to entrance Hall and a business room and servants quarters (down a few steps perhaps) at the back, then up a few broad low steps to the Hall around which all the rooms are arranged'. 186

suggesting Peto might have planned some of Collingham Gardens.

In February 1888, the Architectural Association visited Collingham Gardens,

'The plan of each varies, a feature in all the houses being made of the entrance-hall, which is approached by the lobby from the front door, the staircase being placed in an adjoining space slightly screened off the hall; a very picturesque treatment is obtained by this means. The reception rooms are so arranged as to have ingle nooks or large recesses with mullioned windows breaking the straight line of the walls'. 187

Concern for variety in planning was equalled by the concern for interior design of the highest quality in all the houses. Naturally some are more elaborately finished than others¹⁸⁸. Raffles Davison commented on 39 Harrington Gardens in 1881.

'They (George and Peto) have acted as true and thorough architects, in as much as all the fittings and decoration of the house are from their designs. Notwithstanding the picturesque charm of the exterior, those who have benefited by Mr Gilbert's courtesy in seeing all the interior, will agree that the outside of a house is only of a fractional interest compared with its inside appearance'. 189

By the early 1880s, the philosophies of the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic Movements, with their roots in the earlier reforming theories of Pugin, Ruskin, Morris and others, had resulted in a unification of the arts of architecture and design. The architects role was now more demanding as Robert Kerr, writing in 1884, pointed out,

'He (the architect) can no longer rest content with having provided a building that is merely conveniently planned, properly constructed, and well proportioned, which other hands shall then clothe with decorative work and furnish ornamental with accessories; there is finishing work everywhere, minor art work, which is part and parcel of his scheme and which he must himself design and control; there is characteristic carving for instance, and he must direct the carver;

painter still more, there may be even set pictures and statuary sometimes; there is metalwork, glass work, plaster work or some equivalent, even paper-hanging or some equivalent and so on; there is floor work, wall work, cabinet work, furniture work; sometimes upholstery; carpets, tapestry; a multitude of miscellaneous fixtures and fittings, and even unfixd ornaments; all of these may more or less put in a claim to be 'endowed with artistic merit' by the one designer, lest anything unexpectedly awry should mar the effect of the whole design'. 190

This widening of the architect's responsibilities, Kerr maintained, was a response to a

'corresponding change in public feeling which must be associated with the operation of South Kensington policy. Indeed, I am almost inclined to say that the 'bric-à-brac' style, for such as it is, of what we call Queen Anne Architecture, is properly the South Kensington Museum Style'. 191

Curiously, many of the clients and first residents of both sets of houses appear to have already been living in South Kensington, often in houses no more than twenty years old, but since no obviously aesthetic taste can be detected in any of the early tenants, with the exception of Gilbert and Cassels, it is perhaps dubious to ascribe any particular affection for the style or dislike of stucco Italianate houses.

Both George and Peto were well qualified to undertake the interior designing of the development. They provided not only Dutch, but more varied and individual schemes based on almost every school and epoch of the early Northern Renaissance, thus reflecting their own interests as well as fashionable taste. While the detailing responds to the Aesthetic Movement, with aesthetic wallpapers and interior schemes, the quality of workmanship in the panelling, door furniture, carving and other details reflect the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In all the houses the stairs are of oak, and there is much dark panelling contrasting with stone chimneypieces, while ornamental strapwork ceilings and stamped leather or otherwise 'aesthetic' wall coverings. In style, the decoration borrows from almost every Northern Renaissance school without losing conviction. It is most lavish on the highly carved freizes and fireplace arches. Often small panels of Holbeinesque painted glass are introduced, and occasionally porches

have mosaic floors in Dutch tradition. The detailing never degenerated into caricature for the sake of cultivating quaintness. Quality and variety were uppermost. Harold Peto, writing about his visit to Boston in 1887, recalled,

'Mr Peabody, an architect called and took me over 3 of his houses which are even better than Roth's, they really are Al. I should like George to see them, he has no conception how good they are, and how beautifully planned, and in the most excellent and varied taste, no repeating anywhere.

Met Mrs Gardiner by appointment at 10.30 and she took me over Frank Higgensons in Beacon St, one of Richardsons finest houses, it is really splendid, there are many things that all to fits better than anything we do. I am beginning to think English houses will look rather like cow houses after these. Then we went over Nat Theyers house, a swell one of Sturgess, admirable plan and arrangements most commendable, but the taste not quite so good'. 192

Few details survive of the materials employed or the craftsmen who collaborated with Peto Brothers and George and Peto. Lavers and Westlake supplied the glass at 39 Harrington Gardens, where J.Starkie Gardner supplied the ornamental brass panels fronting the radiators, Howard and Sons carried out some decorations. The 'art' metalwork at 9 Collingham Gardens was supplied by Ellis and Rice. Presumably these firms also executed work in other houses.

The developments, described by Muthesius, as 'among the finest examples of domestic architecture to be seen in London'¹⁹³, established George and Peto's reputation as progressive domestic architects. At Harrington and Collingham Gardens, they produced work of an unusually high artistic quality and individuality, both internally and externally, within the bounds of organised speculation. The Queen Anne style which abounded in Kensington was dubbed 'Pont Street Dutch' by Sir Osbert Lancaster.

'As far as I know, the expression 'Pont Street Dutch' was all my own work and was coined many years ago when Sir John Betjeman and I were working for the Architectural Review. By the way, to my mind the finest examples of the style are to be found not in Pont Street itself, but in Harrington Gardens'. 194

CHAPTER 4: THE PROLIFIC PRACTICE 1882-92

Terra-Cotta: the possibilities

Throughout the 1880s George and Peto used terra-cotta with great success in works ranging from the domestic to the ecclesiastical. Stanley Adshead remarked later of George. 'He was the only man who could successfully use terra-cotta'¹.

The development of attitudes to, and the technology of, the material, has been well documented by Margaret Henderson Floyd², who maintains that by 1866,

'the whole matter of fictile materials - ornamented brick, terra-cotta, tile and pargetting, - was at the center of architectural enthusiasm and controversy. Although all of these materials had experienced a revival over the previous twenty years, they were only coming into general acceptance in the late 1860s, for exterior surfacing'.³

More specifically, terra-cotta had undergone intensive development as an architectural material in England since the 1830s. Its technological development evolved in three stages. First manufactured as tesserae for mosaics, it was then developed as encaustic (inlaid) tile flooring, by the Minton Company in 1845. In the late 1860s, three dimensional exterior terra-cotta was being manufactured and applied with, 'all its attendant complexities'⁴. Margaret Floyd believes that this development corresponds closely with phases in the development of the Gothic Revival, arguing that, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, during the Picturesque phases of the Revival, various types of artificial stone were used as exterior surfacing materials, frankly replacing more expensive carved stone ornament. During the early 1840s, when the Gothic Revival moved into a second, ethical phase, under the direction of Pugin, the Ecclesiologists rejected terra-cotta, 'resulting in the divorce of the material from general use of Gothic Revival exteriors for two decades'⁵.

'Within this context, then, for churches and educational buildings, terra-cotta was eschewed for exterior use on Gothic buildings, still being considered an imitation stone. Yet its use was encouraged for interior, two dimensional surfacing in forms like encaustic (inlaid) tile and mosaic flooring. Each of these uses had clear medieval precedent.

During the 1850s increasingly polychromatic Gothic facades were executed, by and large in stone and brick, by such architects as William Butterfield, Benjamin

Woodward, and J.P. Seddon. Then in the early 1860s terracotta began to appear as trim in commercial architecture such as railroad stations and hotels. The most obvious examples of this shift are Cuthbert Broderick's Grand Hotel, Scarborough (1862-1867) or E.M. Barry's Charing Cross Hotel, London (1862), neither being Gothic in style.

However, by the late 1860s, the hegemony of the Ecclesiologists had crumbled. Writers such as Ruskin, G.E. Street, Gilbert Scott and Lewis Gruner had developed the theoretical foundation to justify the use of terracotta in Gothic building'. 6

As Gothic became secularised, terracotta made a transition to the exterior, providing chromatic decoration for monumental public buildings, on a large scale, in the 1870s and after.

Margaret Floyd contends that the transition of terracotta to Gothic form came to a head in the mid 1860s in England, where a number of overtly terracotta buildings appeared within the maturing Italian Gothic secular tradition. Most prominent among these were the South Kensington Museums by Sykes and Fowkes (1867-69), particularly the courtyard and the Huxley Building; the Wedgwood Institute (1866), by G.B. Nichols and Robert Egar in Burslem, Staffordshire, and the New Alleyn College, Dulwich (1867), by Charles Barry Jnr.

'It is hard to overestimate the extent to which terracotta was imbedded in the body, spirit and purse of South Kensington, so deeply did it relate to the philosophical *raison d'être* of the institution'. 7

argues Floyd. While the ornamental philosophy at South Kensington was Renaissance, as with the contemporaneous Gothic Revival it propounded unity and interdependence of the arts. The Wedgwood Institute was highly important since, 'With the expert management of Beresford-Hope it seems to have overcome the major ethical difficulties of incorporating terracotta into the now ascendent Gothic mode'⁸. Charles Barry Jnr's buildings at Dulwich College were the largest terracotta installations in England and 'the final testimony to the iconographic confusion associated with terracotta in the late 1860s'⁹. They formed the next step in the transition of terracotta from classically based commercial design to monumental Gothic architecture.

By the 1860s the material had become popular - most architects used it, though Shaw was one of the few who did not. Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905), the non-ecclesiastical Gothic architect, did much to popularise the material. Although he did not use exterior terracotta widely on earlier works in Leeds and Manchester, his Natural History Museum (1873-80), and his Liverpool University buildings

(1887-92), showed its extensive employment. Waterhouse, in the company of many contemporaries, was much concerned by soot and pollution causing the decay of buildings, and the obliteration of natural colours. This was to be one of the reasons why terra-cotta held such an attraction. It was 'made from a clay found in the same pit as coal which did the mischief, it seems', argued Waterhouse,

'the only building material which can successfully withstand its corroding influence. In terra-cotta the fire will at once give us those beautiful accidental tints of which we might avail ourselves if we chose boldly to use them'. 10

A material 'of the earth', yet seemingly ideally suited to improved nineteenth century production methods, solving the problems of decay, diminishing quantities of stone, and rising costs, terra-cotta seemed to have possibilities as the material of the age. It was durable, washable and colourful, but it was far from being problem free.

Made from a grained clay with a high percentage of silicates and vitreous material, baked at an extremely high temperature (2,400F) until the silicates run in a flux, terra-cotta when dry, was considered to be the most imperishable of all building materials. However, constructive difficulties emerged in manufacture and installation. Due to shrinkage of the clay, designs had to be drawn 13" to the foot, by the architect. To facilitate drying, blocks were made hollow with interior webbing and small enough to avoid twisting in firing. For projecting areas the medieval metal anchoring system was still necessary. Special cements which did not swell in setting were necessary to prevent the hollow filled blocks from cracking after installation.

'Considerable uncertainty as to the chemical composition of terra-cotta, methods of finishing, uneven quality control in manufacture, and the effect of this variation on permanence were at the source of the storms of controversy surrounding the material in England in the late 1860s'. 11

Such problems were not easily resolved, as the number of articles in the building journals of the 1880s and 1890s explaining away warpage, shrinkage, slowness of production, and erratic deliveries, bear witness. The contractor of the Natural History Museum failed probably over problems of supply. Naturally the architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement loathed it as hard and textureless. Eventually the material

became a victim of its own popularity; expedient methods aimed at lowering cost and increasing production, resulted in poor quality and high colouring. Furthermore, by 1908, George reported,

'Terra-cotta has been tried and found wanting; its surface cannot resist the insidious combination of sulphur and damp that makes our London atmosphere'. 12

Waterhouse understood how to use terra-cotta successfully as a building material, rather than purely decoratively. George and Peto were to follow this lead, and their use of it dates from c.1881 until c.1892. Doultons, who with Minton and Blanchard had supplied terra-cotta for the South Kensington Museums, were George and Peto's regular suppliers and produced with Peto Brothers, the 'Doulton-Peto' fireproof terra-cotta in 1885. The coincidence of this date with George and Peto's extensive use of terra-cotta for entire facades, rather than mere decorative detailing is of particular interest. George and Peto had begun tentatively in 1881 by using the material for decorative panels at 35 and 37 Harrington Gardens. By 1885 they were showing increasing confidence. 7 Collingham Gardens, of that year, was the first in the development to be faced entirely with terra-cotta. In the same year they also designed 104-111 Mount Street exclusively in terra-cotta.

At Collingham Gardens, George and Peto were able to demonstrate their competence in handling the material. As Waterhouse had done previously, they showed that it was possible to obtain very satisfactory results by using a plain wall surface and the colour of the material, (numbers 7, 12 and 12a, designed in 1885). Where terra-cotta and brick were combined, (numbers 1, 6 and 11, designed, 1884, 1884-85 and 1885 respectively), the mouldings are quite reticent, forming ornamental pilaster strips. At number 16, designed in 1886-87 terra-cotta was employed for the mullions. The detailing never degenerated into fussiness, for the sake of cultivating the picturesque. Instead, remarkable variety was achieved by a carefully controlled handling of the material, which showed the architects to have a sensitivity to its properties and potential within a scheme.

Throughout the period of development at Harrington and Collingham Gardens (1880-88), George and Peto experimented elsewhere with their employment of terra-cotta.

Commercial street architecture presented entirely different problems compared with domestic work. The facade had to be arresting, but not

too abrasive, and capable of being read from street level. George was to write, in 1908,

'We must accept the fact that our streets are composed of shops and that our architecture must adapt itself to trade purposes. The builders of those fine Hanse towns built for tradesmen, and our clients must not feel that they have to make choice between architecture and utility. Ample supports must be shown and not hidden by plate-glass; but one often sees robust rustications, key stones, and blockings that are somewhat out of scale with the shop and its purpose'. 13

For their design for premises for Messrs A.F. Daniells at 42, 44 and 46 Wigmore Street, W1 in 1883 George and Peto used a formula of Early Renaissance style executed in red brick and buff terra-cotta, to be reworked subsequently at Collingham Gardens. In the Wigmore Street design, capital is made by reduplicating the terra-cotta detailing, creating an effective rhythm with windows, walls, terra-cotta and brick. The facade is controlled by three shaped gables, and has an arcaded ground floor and central doorway, executed in terra-cotta. (Pl.148) (Pl.149)

In 1885, George and Peto returned to work on the Duke of Westminster's Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair, where a considerable amount of redevelopment was taking place in three separate areas, centred upon Mount Street, Duke Street and Green Street. 14 The relatively high standard of overall design here, may be largely attributed to the discrimination of the Duke himself. Certain architects were selected, and after C.1875,

'prospective rebuilding lessees knew that the Duke would insist upon red brick, in the Domestic Revival manner, and even when they were allowed to choose their own architect, their choice must have been greatly affected by this knowledge'. 15

Terra-cotta had been introduced to the estate in the early 1880s by J.T. Wimperis, amongst others. 16

In 1885, a substantial frontage of over 90' on the south side of Mount Street 17 was leased in two blocks to local business men, W.H. Warner, of Lofts and Warner, and Jonathan Andrews, a builder with premises on the north side of Mount Street, soon due for demolition. The range, designed by George and Peto, consisted of shops, with chambers above, and was divided into distinguishable units to suit the different requirements of Warner and Andrews. George and Peto's spectacular employment of bluff pink terra-cotta for the entire facade secured an overall uniformity, allowing a daring choice of two different styles for

the lessees; a simple late French or Flemish Gothic for Warner (numbers 104-108), and a more subdued Jacobean, late Renaissance for Andrews (numbers 109-111).^(Pl.150) The block was further 'bound together' with a continuous roof, corresponding storey heights, and a line of firm arches over the shops, again slightly varied, segmental in the case of Andrews, elliptical for Warner. Diversity within unity was one of George's strengths. The plans for the chambers also varied, those for Warner's tenants were conventional bachelor flats¹⁸, while the larger flats over Andrew's portion, were an innovative, brilliantly conceived split-level arrangement; each unit having its own offices and kitchen, the former being on a floor higher than the respective chambers and having a private staircase in addition to the entrance from the main stairs.¹⁹ Andrews was his own builder, and used brick and terra-cotta from Messrs Edwards, while George and Peto employed the builders Messrs Stephens and Bastow,²⁰ and remained faithful to Doultons for the supply of terra-cotta. The pierced balconies and open tracery, used to finish the square bays, illustrate the versatility of terra-cotta as a building material. When, in 1891-92, Andrews decided to take the corner site, with the cul-de-sac opposite Carlos Place, George and Peto were able to extend the two bays eastwards to cover numbers 112-113 without a visible break,^(Pl.151) and to vary the plan again, this time with another arrangement of bachelor flats.²¹

The picturesque effect of the Mount Street redevelopment was greatly enhanced by a new public garden to the rear of the south side. In December 1888, the Duke offered to pay St George's Vestry the cost of maintaining the gardens during his lifetime.²² An unsightly building was removed from the centre of the gardens, and the Duke provided land allowing the widening of the frontage out of Mount Street next to the Vestry Hall.²³ George and Peto were commissioned, in 1892, to design the public drinking fountain,^(Pl.152) now in the centre of the gardens, and about which T. Raffles Davison commented, 'The granite reservoir and the admirably modelled bronze pedestal seem nearly good enough for Venice'.²⁴

From 1887, just after large scale rebuilding began on the Estate, George and Peto appeared on the list of 'approved architects' and in 1889, when work began on the north side of the street, they were employed to design facades to the plans of others, for 1 - 5 Mount Street, between Davies Street and Carpenter Street. There was to be less terra-cotta on this side, and so they employed neat cut and moulded brick

(Pls 153 & 154)

dressings in their early Flemish or French Renaissance manner.²⁵

George, for what is probably his finest church, took the unusual step of employing liberal quantities of Doulton's terra-cotta. The commission to design St Andrew's, Guildersfield Road, (designed 1885, built 1886-87),^(Pls 155 & 156) meant a return to Streatham and a posthumous connection with the Revd Stenton Eardley, since the church was to be a memorial to the crusading vicar of Immanuel, who died in 1883, aged sixty-two. Approximately £8,000 had been raised to commemorate this 'prophet of the district', by the new vicar, Canon Streatfield,²⁶ and the parish of St Andrew's was to be somewhat appropriately 'cut out' from that of Immanuel, the rising population doubtless justifying such provision.²⁷

George chose perpendicular Gothic, perhaps drawing inspiration from the lead offered by Bodley and G.G.Scott Jnr, during the previous decade, and the style hastily adopted by Shaw at St Margaret's, Ilkley, Yorkshire. Shaw's conception of 1876-77, owed something of its design to Bodley's St Augustine's, Pendlebury (1874-76), where Bodley had

'at a stroke abandoned Early English, the chancel arch, and the integration of a tower in the design of the main church. Instead he presented a single, uninterrupted vessel in which detail was subordinate and east and west ends of equal architectural value'.²⁸

Shaw had been quick to respond,

'I am so sick of the everlasting modern church, with its orthodox pitched roof and its feeble spire . . . I am sure that it is mass that tells and not mouldings or architecture'.²⁹

George, unlike Shaw, was not prepared to spare detailing, but nevertheless clear echoes of St Margaret's can be felt at St Andrew's, in the high walls of the clerestory. The horizontality follows Street and Bodley, but, like St Margaret's, St Andrew's had deceptively high walls. The areas of plain wall, however, of red Bracknell bricks, are relieved by the novel employment of terra-cotta bands, and act as a useful foil for the rich tracery of the windows.

(Pl.157)

Internally, the church is lofty, with a fine arcade. Provision was made for wide side aisles, projecting beyond the faces of the shallow transepts using, externally, three cross (pitched), gables of exceptionally low character. The nave and chancel roof are kept at single level, under a very low pitch, a solution pioneered by G.G.Scott, Jnr at St Agnes, Kennington, (1874-77). Following Shaw's lead, George provided the west end

with a window to correspond with that to the east - thus reinforcing the interdependence of chancel and nave. George's abolition of the chancel arch, retained by Shaw at Ilkley, further emphasised this effect. Perpendicular was a notoriously difficult style to handle, but George introduced a whole series of well judged decorative conceits to animate the surfaces.

Terra-cotta was introduced for all the dressings, tracery, and much of the interior decoration. Moulded terra-cotta panels alternate with brickwork panels around the sanctuary, and are an effective device, being somewhat restrained. George clearly realised that over enthusiastic detail would diffuse and trivialize the effect, and the well judged decoration, calculated to add to the sense of power of the grouping, is very successful.

(Pl.158)

The restrained reredos was a gift from George in 1901-02; the chancel screen dates from 1913 and is by Jones and Willis; the east window dates from 1918. A glass mosaic panel, also from George, of the Last Supper, flanked by two decorative mosaic panels placed immediately under the east window, is by James Powell and Sons of Whitefriars Road. The wrought iron font cover, designed by George,^(Pl.159) recalls the well-head covers at Rousdon (1873-83), and Wayford Manor, Somerset (c.1900).

North of the chancel is the lofty organ chamber³⁰ approached by an octagonal turret staircase. Externally, the turret, with its salmon pink terra-cotta detailing, marks the north-east angle of the north transept, and terminates in a conical spirelet of which the angles of the upper half are broken into crockets. Below the springing is an open stage, each facet of the octagon having a gabled head, and below the stage is a series of traceried panels, not pierced, but very effective in demonstrating the uses of terra-cotta. These panels afford a rather unexpected, but well handled transition from plain masonry at the lower portion of the turret, to its more ornate belfry. A louvred window, high up in a transept gable, intimates the presence of bells and implies that the turret is a staircase only.

The vicarage next door, of 1886,^(Pl.160) built of red brick, with characteristic straight and tongued tile-hanging, recalls South Hill, Bromley (1881), in terms of idiom. The plain walls and fenestration are reminiscent of Butterfield, but the massing of the entrance front in particular, is exciting and imaginative. It contains a finely panelled hall, and the quality of detail throughout, is high.

The church hall, just above the vicarage, fronts the road with a shaped gable. A long, low building, it has a row of continuous dormer windows and dates from 1898, and is therefore by George and Yeates.

Woolpits, Ewhurst, Surrey (1885-88)

From as early as 1874, when he was shown a watercolour drawing by Harry Hine, of the view from Coneyhurst, (or Pitch Hill), Henry Doulton (1820-97, later Sir), had always cherished a desire to build a house in Surrey. The area which particularly attracted him was the Parish of Ewhurst, west of Dorking, and east of Guildford. After a visit in 1876, he determined to find an estate and site for a house. In 1883 he rented Coneyhurst and Rapsley Farms.³¹ He reconstructed Rapsley, creating a rather charming country residence, 'But he wished for a 'place', for a great property and a fine new house, wholly designed for him and made to suit him'.³²

The opportunity arose in 1885, coincidentally the year in which 'Doulton-Peto' fireproof terra-cotta was produced. Doulton bought an estate in the broad valley to the east of Rapsley,³³ a considerable extent of property almost down to Sbere, on one side of Pitch Hill, and to Cranleigh on the other. Five miles from Gomshall and Ockley stations, it was perfectly sited for a London and Potteries industrial manufacturer who wished to escape from the City, or entertain visitors.

Woolpits, reported 'about to be commenced' in June 1885,³⁴ and 'nearly completed' in January 1888,³⁵ occupied a commanding position on a spur of level ground, projecting from the hillside, affording excellent views to the south, over the long stretch of land to the South Downs. (Pls 161,162,163 & 164)

The most effective view of the house is from the side of the hill, to the south-west, where the composition with tower and open arcaded belvedere^(Pl.165) is shown to the best advantage. George and Peto chose a fairly restrained Tudor style. The house was built with specially made thin red bricks³⁶ and somewhat appropriately, has Doulton terra-cotta dressings and mullions, used to particularly elaborate effect on the chimneys. The roofs were covered with Horsham stone slabs.

For the plan,^(Pl.166) George and Peto adopted an asymmetrical double pile which allowed all the principal rooms, drawing, morning, dining and billiard rooms, to face south, while the 41' square staircase hall was

set at the corner of the main block, with an extension into an open loggia, with views across the valley. The advantage of the asymmetrical double pile plan was that the hall could be placed at the front, back or side of the house, or could run right through. At Woolpits the placing of the hall to the north-east corner, rendered it free of traffic routes except to the loggia, creating a more intimate space, with corner inglenook and an informal staircase with richly carved balustrade and posts. (Pl.167)

Somewhat predictably, Doulton terra-cotta reoccurs in the internal decoration. While terra-cotta lent itself well to patterned forms in chosen places, the work of George Tinworth, one of Doulton's leading craftsmen, pre-empted the banality of mere repetition. He carved the panel over the entrance door in the porch, with 'Abraham Receiving the Angels Visit', and also a fine terra-cotta chimney breast over the inglenook, which included a panel with carvings, 'suggestive of domestic employments and hospitality'.³⁷ (Pl.168) In the dining room, George and Peto created a classical setting appropriate for Tinworth's bas relief of 'The Sons of Lydippe', placed above the fireplace.^(Pl.169) The corner of the dining room, housed a serving doorway, opening in two halves. which provided an efficient means by which food could be served from the kitchen across the passage, obviating a circuitous route via the hall. By far the most impressive and elaborate display of Doulton Ware, was in the billiard room, where it was combined with 'impasto' to create a rich effect.³⁸

The grounds of the house were landscaped by Edward Kemp of Birkenhead³⁹ An enroofed gazebo, to the designs of George and Peto crowned the hill, behind which Kemp laid out a geometrical garden. Unfortunately, Doulton's wife, an invalid in the early 1880s, was never able to visit Woolpits, and Sir Henry's principal activity was 'strolling about', exploring the estate in pursuit of 'landscape effects'.⁴⁰

Woolpits is unique, being the only country house where George and Peto employed terra-cotta. The combination of brick and terra-cotta, considered to be rather strident at the outset, has mellowed very effectively. The entrance lodge is characteristic of George and Peto's small house designs. (Pls 170 & 171)

Cadogan Square (1886-88) and the Albemarle Hotel (1887-88), London

In 1886, with the west side of Collingham Gardens under way, but not completed,⁴¹ George and Peto designed 50 and 52, Cadogan Square, Chelsea, for Col A.W.Thynne and T.A.de la Rue respectively.^(Pls 172,173,174) In 1875, the

newly formed Hans Place Estate Company had undertaken to develop this part of the Earl of Cadogan's Estate. The site, which was to contain Cadogan Square, Lennox Gardens and Pont Street, consisted in the early 1870s of two main elements, a former market garden belonging to Smith's Charity, and a large house known as The Pavilion, built c.1780 by the architect Henry Holland for himself. The Pavilion, known in the 1870s as Sloane Place, was at the centre of the development known as Hans Town, comprising discreet stock brick houses for the prosperous middle classes, laid out by Holland and his father, a builder, on ground leased from the Cadogan family. By the 1870s the situation had changed radically, Sloane Place was renamed The Pavilion, and split up into three houses, part of the ground being rented to form the Prince's Sporting Club⁴² who rented the adjoining market garden from Smith's Charity for use as a cricket ground. But as Holland's leases expired in the 1870s and 1880s, the Pavilion Grounds gave way to fast moving development. The fashionable variations of the new red brick style rendered Holland's houses outmoded, and so most were rebuilt or remodelled to accord with contemporary taste and prosperity. In March 1874, a Hackney builder, North Rithendon, signed an agreement with Earl Cadogan and Smith's Charity, who owned the Pavilion Estate and the adjoining cricket ground, agreeing, on the basis of ninety-nine year leases and a fixed ground rent, to build houses 'not inferior to those in Lowndes Square', intimating that stucco faced Italianate terraces were to be the model.⁴³ Lord Cadogan was following a traditional pattern in placing the development in the hands of a builder/architect⁴⁴, but tradition was broken when Rithendon was replaced by 'the Cadogan and Hans Place Estate Co.Ltd',⁴⁵ chaired by Col W.T.Makins, who, with his brother Henry F.Makins, shared progressive views on domestic architecture. Their penchant for fashionable red brick⁴⁶, in the style endorsed by Shaw,⁴⁷ together with the successful terrace of 1873 on the Portman Estate in Upper Berkeley Street, must have made the style irresistible.

The development of Cadogan Square shared none of the advantages of that closely regulated speculation enjoyed by George and Peto at Harrington and Collingham Gardens, but rather shows a pattern resulting from less careful regulation. The Company made its own terms with clients and builders; and while some houses, as in the case of numbers 50 and 52 were built for individual clients, much of the square was sub-leased, in blocks, to builders or developers who were allowed to choose their own

architects. The contrast between the sections of the development undertaken by builders, such as Trollope and Sons⁴⁸ (north and east sides), and Thomas Pink (south-west corner), who engaged architects to design blocks; and those houses designed by independent architects like Shaw⁴⁹, A.J. Adams, William Young and George and Peto, for individual clients, is very much apparent.⁵⁰

Numbers 50 and 52 (1886-88), were among the last houses to be built in the square⁵¹, and number 52 is undoubtedly the most extreme example of architectural individualism, surpassing that of Young at number 54. The client was Thomas Andros de la Rue (later 1st Bart. cr. 1896), one of the partners in the biggest of London printing works. The detailing is ostentatious, combining as it does, Renaissance and Jacobean detailing grouped within a loosely Dutch facade, surmounted by a single curved gable. The combination of red brick, and buff terra-cotta dressings, is allowed free rein; effusive strapwork and grotesque ornaments jostle for supremacy. The ebullient decoration was all that a client could have hoped for; flat scroll ornaments in brickwork, rusticated pilasters standing on corbels, often with no direct architectural purpose, but which must have delighted Doultons, who could have no better advertisement for the decorative possibilities offered by their terra-cotta. The Builder, with a note of resignation, noted,

'this is the fashion now, and the authors cater for it better than most of their contemporaries, though they can do much better things than this'. 52

doubtless recalling the well-judged decoration at Harrington and Collingham Gardens. Muthesius enthused,

'in the block of houses in Cadogan Gardens, London has to thank Ernest George's devoted absorption in his task for one of the finest layouts of this kind ever created'. 53

The porch leads to a vestibule and then into the hall, where it is immediately apparent that the rich decoration of the exterior is continued within. Richly carved oak panelling surrounds the hall fireplace of carved stone, which stretches to the ceiling. The stairs, given a generous allowance of space, rise horizontally across the house. Behind the oak staircase lies the dining room, with carved panelling and oak beamed ceiling to match that of the hall. The front of the house

harbours a quaintly shaped drawing room, overlooked by a small boudoir or music gallery. On the first floor are billiard room, library and De la Rue's own suite ⁵⁵. No details survive pertaining to craftsmen employed.

(Pls 172, 173 & 174)

In contrast, number 50, built 1886-87 for Col A.W. Thynne, is positively sober, presumably a deliberate foil for its neighbour, whose facade could not have been matched. The relationship succeeds. With its simple, straight gable, and Venetian attic window, acting almost as a pediment to what is a quite classically arranged facade, the house has an elegant vertical emphasis, well judged in view of its narrow frontage, which was considerably less than that of number 52. The original drawing ⁵⁶ reveals that an opening casement in the bay was originally intended, with a broad balcony and decorative iron railings. Much of this was abandoned, only a token gallery runs around at first floor level, its chaste iron railings creating an apposite note of simplicity.

In 1887 George and Peto published their design ⁵⁷ (Pl. 179) for the rebuilding of the old Albemarle Hotel, to occupy a most conspicuous site on the corner of Piccadilly and Albemarle Street, opposite St James Street. As had been the case in Wigmore and Mount Streets, shops were to be contained on the ground floor ⁵⁸, and George and Peto employed their favourite elliptical arched openings. A porch formed the hotel entrance in Albemarle Street, while a second doorway was cleverly set at an angle to Piccadilly. Internally, the kitchens were housed at the top of the building and there were passenger, luggage, and serving lifts. Every detail was arranged for the quiet and efficient working of the hotel. The style was loosely based on Francois Ier, The British Architect remarked,

'The Albemarle Hotel, Piccadilly, had a picturesque frontage with dormers having a slender, detached scroll-work, which, it is to be hoped, will be executed in a perfectly homogeneous, sound material or else such devices are very risky'. ⁵⁹

George and Peto's selection of buff pink terra-cotta, for this, one of their most conspicuous buildings, ensured that both the facades and decorative details would retain their quality. Furthermore, as Adshead was later to remark of George, 'He was a great colourist and his building at the corner of Albemarle Street, the Albemarle Hotel, testifies to this'. ⁶⁰ Terra-cotta did not appear frequently in Piccadilly, despite its popularity in Mayfair, and The British Architect welcomed its introduction,

'After the dreary monotony of the hotels in Northumberland Avenue, the new Albemarle Hotel in Piccadilly came as a grateful relief and suggested what the Avenue might have been in the hands of Mr Ernest George'. 61

The hotel was further extended towards Albemarle Street by George and Peto in 1892. (Pl.180)

The Yellow House, Palace Court, Bayswater for Percy Macquoid, also designed in 1892 (to be discussed later in the chapter), appears to be not only the last work undertaken by Peto Brothers, Builders, but also George and Peto's last employment of terra-cotta.

Buchan Hill, nr Crawley, Sussex (1882-86)

At Harrington and Collingham Gardens (1880-88), rich Flemish and German Renaissance inspired designs were combined with a few reticent exercises in an indigenous Jacobean and Cotswold vernacular. Two country houses of different size, begun in 1882-83, exemplify perfectly on a larger scale, the co-existence of the differing styles in George and Peto's current repertoire.

Buchan Hill is a splendidly lavish display of George and Peto's more extreme stylistic conceits, but couched within the framework of a Queen Anne formula- somewhat unexpected in the countryside, where initially, an Old English style might have appeared more suitable. (Pl.181) The extremely florid mixture of Jacobean and Franco-Flemish Renaissance motifs were perhaps calculated to delight the client. Philip Felix Renaud Saillard, reputed to have been an emigré from Normandy, accrued his considerable fortune by the sale of ostrich feathers, then very popular in haute-couture circles. When he died in 1917, he was considered to have been going downhill financially, on the basis of having left a mere £250,000. Apparently the ostrich feather trade fluctuated in twenty year cycles, so that it is possible that 1880-90 was his peak period. By the turn of the century the Americans managed to breed ostriches in California - it had taken some time, but they captured the entire world market; their production being cheaper, quicker, and better. With the demise of horse-drawn vehicles, the black feathers considered essential for both horses and hearse, were not required. The decline in France was, however, much slower and there is no doubt that the Victorian cult for death had hitherto made Saillard's trade a paying game.

At the height of his success Saillard clearly decided to join the ranks of the country house owners. It is thought that there was an earlier house on the estate, but that the new house was built on a different site. Although many continental emigrés might have preferred town life, on balance, Saillard seems to have been of the school who favoured the life of the landowner. Buchan Hill, about three miles from Crawley, was just about as far as Saillard could go, if he wanted to remain in touch with his business life in London - which he did until his death. It is even possible that the character of the Sussex landscape dictated his choice, because it reminded him of his native Normandy.

As to why George and Peto were selected as architects is a matter for speculation in the absence of documentation. By 1882, the firm was attracting a considerable amount of publicity, reinforced by the development in Harrington Gardens, and if they were considered a fashionable firm, it is likely that Saillard engaged them for that very reason, and the desire to display wealth and prestige in novel and extravagant architecture would seem in character. A great deal of rumour surrounds Saillard, but it seems possible that he was anxious to have a house in which he could accommodate shooting parties and other social activities. It was thought that Queen Victoria and Edward VII visited the house, but these legends remain undocumented and dubious contes.

The Building News reported in July 1882, that the house was 'in the course of erection' ⁶² and it was completed c.1886. There can be no doubt that artistic freedom was the keynote at Buchan Hill, where the plan was the least formally arranged of all George, Peto and Yeates's larger country houses. A variety of rooms are arranged along a corridor which was set between two ranges on one side of the hall, but along a single range on the other. Short and unequal right angle wings formed the entrance courtyard, the fourth side formed by tall wrought iron enclosure and gates.

The dominant feature of the plan is the hall, forming a vast room which effectively divides the house into two and runs back from the ante-room towards the garden. There were tall windows on each side of a characteristically hooded fireplace, and a sloped-out chimney breast, with a grotesquely carved corbel, featured on the garden side. This arrangement of windows and fireplace was a variation on one favoured by

Devey at St Alban's Court (1875-78), and sometimes by Shaw. Although it seems that the hall would have been open to cross traffic, the space before the great fireplace, with its flanking windows, gives the impression of the intimacy of a giant inglenook.

The arrangement of a two-storeyed hall set in this way was not uncommon in the 1880s, for example Ralph Nevill's Old English, Snowdenham Lodge (1884-86), and Romaine Walker's Rhinefield Lodge (1888-89). This was the only occasion where George and Peto adopted the plan, possibly because of the attendant problem of the reliance upon an open gallery at first floor level running over the entrance vestibule, in order to gain access to the bedrooms. While this extended the conversation area of the hall, it militated against intimacy.

The hall at Buchan Hill measures some 40' x 28' and is partly lined with Barnsnap stone above the oak panelling. To the south-west are the library, drawing and morning rooms, the latter two opening into the large conservatory. Near the drawing and morning rooms a circular turret staircase leads to what was Mrs Saillard's boudoir and bedroom, which occupied one wing of the building at first floor level.

On the other side of the hall, the billiard and dining rooms were arranged, the latter approached by the servery contiguous to the offices. To the east of the garden entrance, and close to the offices, were the business and school rooms, with lavatory for the use of the children. The services were housed in a compact group around a courtyard, an arrangement to be constantly favoured by George and Peto.

The grand staircase, housed in the tower, to the north, is of oak, the newels being carried up as posts ⁶³ and the spaces arcaded, with each step fashioned from a solid block of oak, moulded in front, and on the soffit. The tower above the main staircase provided large water tanks for the supply of the house, and a belvedere above this is reached by stairs in a corbelled octagonal tower; a picturesque feature which avoided complexity in the functional shape of the tanks. There was a basement wing under one wing of the house, which contained cellars, the remainder of the building was excavated to allow the chimneys to be swept from below.

The house is of brick, with Ham Hill dressings and red tiled roofs. The entrance front has a multi-gabled frontage with tower and porch as the focal point; the garden front with the canted bay of the hall and the square bays of the library and drawing room, creates greater

(Pls 184 & 185)

formality. This grouping of three or more bays, often identical in shape, and closely spaced, was something George and Peto cultivated, not only at Buchan Hill, but at Woolpits (1885-88) and Batsford (1888-93). Other familiar devices include the lead capped bay window to the business room, reminiscent of those at Woodhouse, Uplyme (1880), Waterside, Westgate-on-Sea (1880), and 26 Harrington Gardens (1881-82), and the careful use of tall chimneys to anchor the composition, most effectively on the garden front.

The house cost an estimated £45,000, and belongs to the period in the early 1880s where George and Peto were introducing rich detailing, often whimsical and associational. For example, at Buchan Hill, the light fittings were moulded in the form of ostrich feathers. It is the only country house by George and Peto with this rich vocabulary; it would seem that it was considered unsuitable by either the architects or their clients. From this point onwards, George's planning, in general, becomes more symmetrical and increasingly formal - possibly in accord with the taste of subsequent clients, increasingly from the higher echelons of society.

Stoodleigh Court (1883-84); Tiverton, Devon.

In 1872, the year after the completion of Knightshayes (1869-71), Burges's robust, early Gothic design for J. Heathcote Amory MP, a banker who had married into lacemaking, Thomas Carew Daniel inherited the neighbouring estate of Stoodleigh, five miles north-east of Tiverton, on the borders of Devon and Somerset. The inheritance came from his grandfather⁶⁴, who had also held property in Barbados and Demarara. Almost immediately, Daniel started extensive rebuilding on the estate. The church of St Margaret was enlarged by H. Woodyer of Guildford, furnished with stained glass windows, and consecrated in 1880. Daniel married in 1875, and appears to have lived in Stuckeridge, to the north of the estate. By 1877, he had commissioned Lewis Paxton Crace to build him a new house. It was to replace an existing house on the estate which was high up on a slope of ground overlooking Tiverton Vale, and was to be positioned about two hundred yards from this old residence in order to command a better view.

Crace produced a simple design which involved a plain treatment of Jacobean and Stuart features, to be executed in the warm coloured local stone, with Ham Hill dressings and a tiled roof. A simple double pile plan comprised hall, billiard room, drawing and dining rooms, library and business room, with servants quarters arranged around a courtyard.

The principal feature was to have been the rather imposing Jacobean, Elizabethan style square porch, surmounted by a square domed roof, bell cupola and weather vane. Quite why the plan was abandoned is not clear; local rumour suggests that Mrs Daniel did not like the design, but then it is also thought that she did not wholly approve of the subsequent design by George and Peto of 1883. The Daniels certainly sold Stoodleigh Court after ten years of occupation.

While following Crace's lead in choosing mixed early and late Tudor styles at Stoodleigh, George and Peto's design is altogether more accomplished, the emphasis being on a horizontal arrangement which nestles into the surroundings with a casual ease, while taking full advantage of the panoramic views ranging across Dartmoor, the Quantock hills, and Exmoor, afforded by the 800' altitude of the site. ^(Pl. 186) The house is approached by a picturesque, two mile, serpentine carriage drive from the north, through plantations. The treatment of the Tudor elements is simple, and the choice of local stone, quarried on the estate, combined with Ham Hill dressings and mullions, and red tiled roofs, invests the house with an indigenous character. ^(Pls 187 & 188)

Of medium size, the house comprised four reception rooms, twenty-six principal and secondary bed and dressing rooms, five bath rooms, and domestic offices.

Its principal feature is the two storey, open-roofed hall from which the staircase rises. The asymmetrical double pile plan was arranged in such a manner that the library and staircase hall face north, while the morning room with its garden entrance and long drawing room, both immediately behind, face south, taking advantage of the long vistas. ^(Pls 189 & 190)

To the west of this main block are the south facing dining and billiard rooms, served by a north facing corridor connecting the hall and servants quarter, the latter being arranged around a courtyard to the far north west.

Following the plan, the greater part of the north front is taken up by the hall, porch and north corridor windows. The hall, with its east-

west pitch, is cross gabled by the porch, a more modest entrance than that planned by Crace, having only a simple arch, surmounted by a carved stone square reminiscent of 43 Harrington Gardens.

The hall does not occupy a corner of the plan, as was the case at Woolpits, which meant that it could only be lit from one direction - the north side. In order to create interest and lightness, George employed a two-storeyed, five-sided manorial window, with a row of three windows at first floor level, to the west, separated by buttresses.

Windows in the north wall, to the west of the porch, light the corridor, and this section sports half-timbered ends of cross gables above the dining and billiard rooms, breaking the character of what might have been a monotonous roof area.

The same problem did not arise with the south front, since an interesting rhythm of gable ends with a Cotswold vernacular treatment was composed.

The lack of a common axis through the main rooms meant a corresponding complexity in the roof structure, resulting in an interesting pattern of pitch articulations further enriched with the gable construction.⁶⁵

Internally, the hall 60' x 26' is the focal point, with its oak floor, half panelled walls and open beamed ceiling. To the east of the hall, the wide two-storeyed oriel window combined with the three windows at first floor level above the panelling, lighted the space.

The two-storeyed hall, together with the asymmetrical plan, presented certain problems of communication which were resolved by George, with an interesting but not always convenient play of levels.

The staircase rises from the west end of the hall, dividing into two arms at the intermediate landing.^(Pl.191) The left arm rises, through a stone arch to the east-west corridor of the main block, lit by arches opening into the body of the hall, as in a clerestory. The right arm crosses an open balustraded landing at the west end of the hall and turns into the corridor serving the secondary block - in this case, it is lit by windows in the north wall, being immediately above the ground floor corridor. This arrangement of communication corridors allows all the bedrooms to face south, while the flattened round-arched openings lighting the corridor along the south side of the hall, give interest to what might have otherwise been a high, blank wall.

The passage connecting this main corridor to the nursery suite above the library, provided the opportunity for a minstrel window at the east end of the hall - an interesting vantage point from which to observe activities below. While the open arcade, effectively around two sides of the hall, and the minstrel window, provided opportunity to extend the conversation area of the hall, the latter appears somewhat lacking in warmth and intimacy, being spartan compared with some of Shaw's and Nesfield's treatments of similar areas, for example, Greenham Lodge (1878-81), and Loughton Hall (1878). The hall at Stoodleigh however, does form the social focal point, since it serves to connect library, morning room, and drawing room. ⁶⁶ George, furthermore, introduced a number of small, but effective devices into the plan. The inner porch, for instance, while opening straight into the hall, has a doorway to the right, leading unobtrusively into the north corridor. There was, of course, a main opening from the back of the hall, under the arcade, which would form the well lit, processional route to dinner.

The main service corridor is at right angles to the north corridor and George placed a carefully angled passage (which creates externally, a little block between the north and west facades of the courtyard). This was necessitated by the placing of the servants' staircase, ⁶⁷ but led into the butler's room, from which he could see arrivals at the house.

One feature which recurs in many of George's subsequent designs, is the rather elongated proportions of some of his rooms. At Stoodleigh, in this case, the drawing room was 44' x 18' resulting from the positioning of the hall, the proportions of which George would have defended on account of its magnificent views. Oak was used throughout the interiors, the drawing room has elaborate relief decoration with figure and scroll enrichments, an oak floor and sculpted stone fireplace. The dining room has oak floor, dado, coving and ceiling, with fireplace en suite. The three carved beasts on the newels in the hall, closely resemble those at 37 Harrington Gardens serving as a gentle reminder that the works were contemporary. The house, well appointed, centrally heated, and lit by electricity from the outset, demonstrates George's skill in creating a picturesque exterior articulation of gables and other vernacular features, which combine with a workable plan.

Rousdon, Buchan Hill, Stoodleigh Court and Woolpits serve to introduce the range of style, and variety of plans, employed by George, Vaughan

and Peto in their designs for country houses. Between 1885 and 1892 the country house practice was to gather momentum. While the scope of their general domestic practice is examined in this chapter, six country houses which can readily be used to illustrate particular aspects of their work have been singled out for specialist investigation in Chapter 5.

Established Circles; 18 Maddox Street, London W1 and a Wider Clientele

Many commissions of the 1880s were no longer so dependant upon the Peto circle, but resulted increasingly from George and Peto's established reputation. Many clients remained faithful. When in 1881, 46 and 47 Cheapside, the Georgian warehouse of P. B. Cow, Hill and Company was destroyed by fire, George and Peto were the obvious choice to design the replacement. The narrow corner site, at the junction of Cheapside and Bread Street, provided an excellent opportunity for a design derived from Northern Renaissance precedents, so well suited to narrow frontages. Completed in 1882, it slightly predated the completion of 35 and 37 Harrington Gardens. For the five-storeyed premises, George and Peto employed red brick, with moulded brickwork in the Northern German manner, anticipating the style of ⁴³ Harrington Gardens. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1882, alongside Norman Shaw's Allied Assurance Co., the design was singled out for criticism by The Builder who said George had,

'certainly gone back very much from his old faith in standing sponsor for such a building as this, in which the ground storey had not the slightest reference to the superstructure, the openings being spaced quite independently of the openings and piers above, the solid angle of a tall building resting on an angle window on the ground storey. This is not only not an architectural drawing, it is not even building'. 68

The British Architect was more charitable,

'a good Flemish Gothic design piquant and clever, but we should have preferred to see the same feeling worked out in a more English manner'. 69

Shaw's exercise, Queen Anne, modelled on Flemish originals with more than a hint of French work ⁷⁰ was considered to show 'much better and more rational qualities of design' ⁷¹. George and Peto's design cultivated a high degree of archaeological

verisimilitude, while avoiding historicism. It evoked a picturesque quality apparent in George's sketches, such as 'Frankfurt!', ⁷² by no means used as a direct precedent, but exemplifying the spirit which George and Peto hoped to capture at Cheapside, a skill apparent at Harrington and Collingham Gardens. By comparison, Shaw subsumed source material and transmuted it into something more daring and original, but the use of contrasting materials in the Allied Assurance building creates an unusually restless effect.

Further work was executed for Cow in the 1880s, including extensions to the Streatham works, probably the handsome chimney (1885) and 71 Ryecroft Road, Streatham Common (1888) for Douglas Cow ⁷³. Other small commissions were undertaken by the firm in Streatham in the early 1880s, the finest of which was a pair of houses on an awkwardly sloping site, 4 and 6 Thornlow Road, Norwood (1882). Using only simple materials, plain brick and characteristic straight and tongued tile-hanging, George produced a design which instead relied for its effect upon well judged proportion, massing, and spare detail. Such restraint and static massing, always an authentic part of George's architecture, was to become more apparent in the later 1880s. Another link with Streatham was to arise in 1883. Before his death in that year, the Revd Stenton Eardley had set up a fund to build a second church in Switzerland, ^(Pl. 195) for the benefit of the English who frequented the baths at Tarasp. Lady Ashburton ⁷⁴ took up the cause, contributing most of the cost. The low, solid looking building, of locally quarried stone, with its single roof and heavy overhanging eaves, was designed by George and Peto to accord with the mountainous terrain. It was plain and unpretentious, the flèche recalling those at Immanuel Church, Samaden (1872) and Rousdon schools (1873), while the massive, square tower, with gable and saddle-back roof was reminiscent of the unexecuted tower at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Streatham (1876). The carved balustrades of the arcade recall those at Guildford (1879), and Pinner (1881). James Forsyth carved the oak pulpit.

In 1882 another established client, Thomas Goode, who was enjoying considerable success, commissioned Tudor House, Hampstead. ^(Pl. 196) A reticent exercise in Jacobean, executed in brick and not unlike contemporary work at 22-26 Harrington Gardens, it presaged the idiom of George's own house, Redroofs (1888). Extant, but badly mutilated, the house was

designed with a spacious central staircase hall opening into reception rooms, as was the arrangement in Harrington Gardens.

Sir Andrew Barclay Walker (1824- 91), was one of the new clientele. The son of Peter Walker, a successful Scottish brewer, who had moved from Ayr ⁷⁵ to establish a brewery at Bewley Hill, Warrington. Andrew, together with his brother Peter, became partners in their father's firm. They later established separate breweries, Peter at Wrexham, and Andrew at Burton-on-Trent. Andrew Walker was educated in every aspect of the public house and brewery trade. Described as 'a consummate organiser', 'a shrewd judge of men and of events', and 'an indefatigable worker', ⁷⁶ Walker moved from Warrington to Liverpool, where he became prominent as a proprietor of numerous public houses. His introduction of the 'long pull', giving customers more liquor than hitherto, his attractive public houses, together with changes in local licence usages, contributed to his rapid financial success. From this propitious start, shrewd investments in other ventures, such as collieries, ensured that, by the 1870s, Walker was considered in Liverpool business circles to be possibly the wealthiest man in the city.

In 1887, Walker, an active Conservative, became a Town Councillor for Toxteth and an Alderman in 1872. As Mayor of Liverpool, in 1873, he presented £20,000 to the City, for the creation of an Art Gallery. He was knighted and served as mayor again in 1876-77.

The architect of the new Gallery ⁷⁷ (1874-77), opened in 1877 was Cornelius Sherlock (1823- 88), a Liverpool architect responsible for the Picton Reading Room, Liverpool (1875-79) and Gateacre Grange, Woolton, (1851), whence Walker moved in 1866-67 .

George and Peto were first commissioned by Walker in 1883, to make additions and alterations to Gateacre Grange, designed by Sherlock to be Gothic in massing and mood, though not wholly in architectural detailing. George and Peto built a sizeable addition to the north, in rock faced sandstone ⁷⁸ , in the Tudor vernacular which they were employing concurrently at Stoodleigh Court. At Gateacre, however, respectful reference is made to Lancashire Tudor. The square-cut bays to the east and south of the original house are also by George and Peto. They have curved transoms, cut in stone which was a technical tour de force. The style of the additions and alterations recall ⁴⁵ Harrington Gardens, built contemporaneously.

In 1882, Walker, a keen sailor, built The Cuhona, 'possibly one of the most exquisitely fitted steam yachts afloat . . . apparently without any regard to her ultimate cost'.⁷⁹ Designed by St Clare J Byrne of Liverpool, she was a steel yacht, 343 gross tons, single screw, with three masts, and was built by Earles Steamship Co., Hull.

It was not uncommon for architects in the late nineteenth, and early twentieth century to be called upon to design the interiors of yachts.⁸⁰ During the early 1900s the interiors of prestigious ocean going liners were assigned to architects such as Mewes and Davis, James Miller, and others including Harold Peto. George and Peto, commissioned to design the principal rooms of The Cuhona, chose to ignore any maritime connotations and instead deliberately treated the yacht as if it were just another domestic interior.

(Pl.197)

The saloon, 24' x 20, they richly panelled in dark oak; the panels above the dados line, carved in wood and lacquered a dull gold, were separated by fluted and carved pilasters. The ceiling was painted by G.F. Malins. This Renaissance scheme echoed those being rehearsed concurrently at Harrington Gardens. A rich curtain enabled the room to be divided, an arrangement often favoured by George and Peto to convert halls into more intimate areas, it was introduced here for the clearly practical purpose of dividing the limited space into drawing and dining room, at will. The side of the curtain facing the drawing room was maize brocade, the reverse, stamped velvet. A mirror, surmounting the fireplace, was another device to extend the limited space.

The sideboard, piano, writing tables, chairs and even the wine glasses, were all specially designed by George and Peto to accord with the scheme. The sofas were covered with antique Persian rugs.

The state rooms were all treated differently, the Ladies' Room had walnut dados with cretonnes above, while the other rooms were panelled to the ceiling. The entrances to the berths were arched, and hung with Japanese silk curtains. On deck were the chart room, entrance lobby, and boudoir. The lobby, panelled in solid rosewood, had an ensuite cabinet displaying old Rodian china. The boudoir, considered to be the most 'perfectly finished of any part of this boat',⁸¹ had a rosewood dado, surmounted by hangings of velours cisèle in pale terra-cotta and maize.⁸² The ornaments here were all old carved ivory figures, Netsuké and old coloured oriental porcelain. The panelling and cabinet work for these aesthetic interiors were from the shops of Messrs T. Lawrence & Sons. The Builder regretted,

'in these days of luxury, there seems such a desire to make the interior of a ship's cabin like the interior

of the most comfortable of houses; that there is hardly scope left for any of the special character which might be imparted to a ship's cabin, nor is such character visible here; it is a tastefully furnished room, the perspective effect of which conveys the idea that it is too large to belong to any but a yacht of colossal dimensions'. 83

During his period as High Sheriff (1886), Walker entertained on board, the Judges of Assize and on several occasions the Prince of Wales and other members of the Royal Family.

In 1911, Harold Peto was to design the first class accommodation for the *Mauretania*, in a chaste Italian Renaissance style.

Walker's businesses continued to prosper. As well as becoming the proprietor of an Irish Distillery, he erected a great brewery at Burton-on-Trent, where his son, John Reid Walker, was probably employed in some capacity, since George and Peto were commissioned by him in 1884 to design The Knoll, Barton-under-Needwood. ^(Pl.198) A quiet, restrained Old English style was adopted, with tall chimneys, brick lower storey, oak quartering and parquet work ⁸⁴; the latter being used concurrently for work on the Clandon Park Estate ⁸⁵. In 1904 George and Yeates designed Ruckley Grange, Shifnal, Salop, for J.R.Walker, in a quiet Tudor vernacular.

Commensurate with his rising fortunes, was Sir Andrew Walker's purchase in 1884, of Osmaston Manor, Derbyshire for the sum of £250,000, together with furniture, model village, estate and general living. The house had been built in 1846, for John Wright, by Derby architect Henry J. Stevens. The progressive use of the style of James I probably resulted from its proximity to Haddon Hall. George and Peto were immediately engaged to redecorate and furnish the house, described in 1886, as having an interior which 'affords a rich and characteristic example of modern furnishing'. ⁸⁶

The work at Osmaston well illustrates the way in which George and Peto extended their own interests in collecting, and interior design, for the benefit of clients. They employed Messrs Howard and Sons, of Berners Street (who had decorated W.S.Gilbert's dining room), to carry out 'the whole of the elaborate decoration carried out in various parts of the house'. ⁸⁷ Walter Smith, another regular craftsman ⁸⁸ was responsible for the modelling of the plasterwork. The antique furniture and tapestries were supplied by Joseph Duveen, ⁸⁹ the notorious art dealer and impresario.

(Pl.199)

Great tapestries were hung over the walls of the Hall, above an oak dado, those on the side wall being permanent, while that at the end was 'rolled up in the day, and let down over the windows at night'.⁹⁰

Raffles Davison commented,

'These remarkably fine tapestries probably belonged to Francis I of France, having his favourite emblem of a golden salamander in the borders. They are hung on a blue-grey cloth background, which was specially designed for the position. The grand staircase, also, is hung with a very exceptional set of tapestries of a somewhat earlier date (about 1500), and contains the finest drawing imaginable of late Gothic figures and foliage. Here also, one of the tapestries falls down over the great window above the first landing; so that at night the whole of the staircase walls are clothed in tapestry, which presents a fine effect viewed from the great hall. These beautiful tapestries have all been collected during the past two years, by the architects, Messrs Ernest George and Peto, and their fortunate possessor is to be envied'.⁹¹

Quality of craftsmanship was paramount. In the dining room, the high oak dado was surmounted by a frieze of brown stamped leather, the skins sewn together using the old craft technique rather than merely stuck together onto the wall. The dining chairs and furniture in the room were 'exceptionally elaborate',⁹² in a 'sort of mid Renaissance' style⁹³, made in oak with seats and backs of pigskin filling, which was engraved with a different design on each chair. The room was decorated in brown, buff, yellow and gold.

According to Davison,

'The drawing room is perhaps the most impressive single apartment in the house. Above a high panelled dado of dark chestnut, which has a frieze of little boys, is a wonderfully beautiful frieze of the finest Genoa velvet, which material is also used to form the great curtain hangings. The background of the velvet is of dull copper gold, with the design in tawny brown thereon. On this frieze are hung a few choice old mirrors and old brass dishes, and Nankin blue jars stand on the top ledge of the dado. The two chimney-pieces are most elaborately carved and moulded, and may be almost termed masterpieces of modern Renaissance carved in chestnut. The fire-places and hearths are done in opaque glass-mosaic, by Powell of Whitefriars. The great stretch of white plaster ceiling has a charming effect. It is divided up into a large number of small panels or coffers, richly decorated'.⁹⁴

Although traditional architects in many ways, in their emphasis on craftsmanship and quality, George and Peto paralleled the Arts and Crafts Movement, thus suggesting that the latter's proprietorial attitude towards craftsmanship is not entirely tenable. George and Peto's employment of W.A.S. Benson, an avowed Arts and Crafts designer, to supply light fittings at Osmaston, should therefore be assessed within this context. His fittings, described in 1886, as 'now beginning to be widely known and appreciated',⁹⁵ were cleverly arranged, for example in the dining room,

'the electric lights are fixed in the hollow of a copper bowl, which directs their light up to the underneath surface of the upper shade, which, itself of beaten copper, reflects the light down over the table just like an effect of warm firelight. To prevent disagreeable effects of darkness above each shade other lights are fixed about the room at sufficient height to produce an equable light in the upper portion of the room. In most instances the lights are suspended from the ceilings by a silk cord ... the light being contained in a glass bowl shaped somewhat like a plover's egg and shaded by a copper plate beaten into the shape of a lotus lily, shedding a most charming, quiet light over the room, which harmonises perfectly with the surroundings'.⁹⁶

At some point, late in 1883 or early 1884, when the practice was expanding rapidly, George and Peto moved from 11 Argyll Street to 18 Maddox Street on the other side of Regent Street, where domestic commissions continued to pour into their first floor offices.

The Domestic Practice 1885-92

Apart from the six large country houses examined in the following chapter, George and Peto were prolific in their designs for small country houses, during the period 1885 - until the end of their partnership in 1892.

Littlecroft,^(Pls 200, 201 & 202) a house and studio built in 1884 by Peto Brothers for Morton Kelsall Peto⁹⁷ on Emery Down, Lyndhurst, Hampshire, like The Knoll, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffs, of the same year, was in a quiet old English style with external quartering and pargetting. Advantage was taken of the slope of the ground, to create an extra room in the height of the main gable, a boudoir being arranged on the first floor landing above the porch.^(Pl. 203) The hall, from which the stairs rose in

three flights in a square space behind posts and arches, recalled the arrangement favoured at 9 Collingham Gardens, Harold Peto's house. ⁹⁸ Like others in Collingham Gardens it could be screened if necessary by curtains from the hall, to create an additional room. The studio, with open roof and gallery was to the right of the hall. Idiosyncratic details such as the motto on the sundial, 'Quoad Peto lumen est', together with the high quality of the contents within, lent individuality to the house;

'rare old plates of various design and colour make a frieze all around the hall, good, old furniture comes in everywhere, and in the bedroom, . . . is a bedstead that was in the family of Oliver Cromwell. Amongst the pictures . . . a strong telling study of landscape by Mr Morton Peto; besides other able work in landscape and portraits, and an exquisite bit of San Remo by Ernest George'. ⁹⁹

The Builder complaining about the general standard of domestic work exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1885 commented,

'We must of course, except from these remarks the always original work of Messrs Ernest George and Peto, artists in a double sense. The houses they build are every way excellent, and the drawings which they contribute are always amongst the freshest and most interesting in our rooms. But the houses are not like the drawings, and consequently the drawings are not true illustrations of the houses. As a fact, their cornices are, like everyone else's, ranged in scrupulously level lines, their chimney stacks are in reality carefully plumbed and do not totter to their fall in hopeless disrepair: their casements are not 'crazy' and their roofs do not 'sag'. Nor do the servants of the house hang out their hearth rugs from the outer walls or display their lingerie to break the long lines of balustrade and balcony. Even South Kensington has not carried its aetheticism to this pitch ¹⁰⁰. Nay, we have even noticed that Mr Ernest George's own beautiful residence is as correct and decorous in these respects as the most philistine of its neighbours. It is only in his drawings that these aids to the picturesque are seen, and we would be the last to take them away. There have been architects who could make exquisite drawings, but who could not translate their designs into bricks and mortar, and there have been others who could build divinely, but could not make such a picture of their works as would have a ghost of a chance with the Hanging Committee. In Mr Ernest George we have an architect who can do both equally well and long may he live to delight us alike with his buildings and his draughtmanship'. ¹⁰¹ .

George and Peto's Royal Academy exhibits in 1885 were Woolpits, houses in Collingham Gardens ^(P1.204) and a House at Ascot. The latter was Llanvair, designed for Charles Joseph Stonor (1837-1919) JP, who was one of a noted Catholic family, his uncle being Thomas, 3rd Lord Camoys,

which accounts for the unusual plan of this house. A chapel was attached designed to accommodate an outdoor congregation of tenants as well as members of the family.

The plan was a favourite asymmetrical double pile, comprising hall, part of which ran north to south, to open out onto a garden front verandah, adjoining morning and drawing rooms, billiard and business rooms, and oak panelled dining room. The Builder enthused 'The plan of the house should be studied carefully for it is perfect'.¹⁰² It is unique in George and Peto's oeuvre, in that it employs the 'offset', in this case the chapel, whose axis formed an obtuse angle with the drawing room front, from which it projected. As Andrew Saint points out, 'Offset plans were no novelty: Wyatville's Endsleigh may be their progenitor'.¹⁰³ Devey employed them frequently, but more as a natural adjunct to his rather rambling arrangements, so perfectly suited to the spontaneity of the Old English style - but the probable precedent for George and Peto, was Shaw's Grims Dyke (1870-72), for Frederick Goodall. Shaw could justify his offset by its creating a better light for a painter's studio, but he devised the room, 'to imitate Horsley's studio at Willesley'. But at Grims Dyke the room was also a centre of entertainment - it was a transition between studio and great hall. The Builder argued that at Llanvair,

'the exact orientation of the sanctuary cannot have been the motive, and the departure from the right angle is too slight for attention in that respect. It is, of course, possible that the object was to broaden the prospect from the drawing-room window, which fills the re-entering angle where the chapel and the drawing room meet; or the arrangement may be merely fanciful, and if so it savours little of affectation'.¹⁰⁴

George and Peto's interiors and plans were invariably contrived to allow air and light to permeate, and this is the probable explanation. The height of the chapel accords with that of the rest of the house, and the angle allowed more light into the morning and dining rooms, which cunningly interconnect, further ensuring a good light at all times.

Externally, the gables, tile-hanging, tall chimneys, together with elaborate wood and plaster decoration, place it firmly in the tradition of George's houses of the early 1880s; Woodhouse, Uplyme, Waterside, Westgate-on-Sea, and work at Pinner and Guildford, although the lower portion was roughcast on brickwork with red brick quoins. The entrance front, chapel and service quarters were arranged around three sides of

a courtyard. The chapel was obviously dominant and could be approached, either from the house, or from the external door for visitors. An ecclesiastical note was engendered by the arched doorway and row of windows. Internally, the chapel, 33' x 15' had a western gallery with arcaded oak screen, approached from the first floor of the house to serve as a private gallery for the family. This was also approached by a visible and winding oak staircase from the general level of the chapel, the sacristy was on the north side. The handsome English oak hammerbeam chapel roof being a special feature.

Another unusual plan appeared the following year, 1886, when George and Peto were employed by Robert Henderson (1851-. 95), to transform Sedgwick Park, near Horsham, Surrey. The present house evidences two periods of construction; while 1886 is the date given on the centre portion of the house, 1903 appears on the tower, and 1904 on the rainwater head.

The history of Sedgwick is a long one.¹⁰⁵ The ruins of an original castle, apparently habitable in 1576, when leased by Sir T. Fynes, are engulfed by woodland, at a distance from the present house. Finding it in a bad state of repair, the subsequent lessee, Sir John Caryll deserted the castle in 1602, for Sedgwick Lodge, on the higher site of the present house. In 1705, Sir John Bennett bought the estate, and added to Caryll's lodge. Possible fragments from this period remain extant; a fine classical doorway incorporated in an annexe to the south of the present house, a pair of gate piers standing in a disused approach, and a fine avenue of elms towards the old castle.

The lodge then passed through the hands of the Duke of Richmond, and in 1750 to Joseph Tudor, from whom it was inherited by the Nelthorpe family. In 1862 the estate was bought by Robert Henderson from James Tudor Nelthorpe, and the name of the house changed from Nuthurst Lodge to Sedgwick Park. Henderson was a Director of the Bank of England, and in 1878 he married Emma Caroline Hargreaves¹⁰⁶, the daughter of J. Hargreaves JPDL who had made his fortune out of calico printing. It is possible that George and Peto were recommended by Samuel Hope Morley, who, in 1882, was made a Director of the Bank of England. His brother Charles, and father Samuel, had employed George and Peto in 1878 and 1886, respectively.¹⁰⁷

(Pls 205,206 & 207)

Sedgwick Park is something of a cuckoo in George and Peto's nest, differing in plan from other work in the 1880s. It is difficult to establish the precise nature of the various phases of building, it seems likely that the house incorporates earlier remnants. For example the office quarters evidence eighteenth century structures. The whole is executed in local materials, Horsham tiles, as the ripple marked layers of sandstone are named. These were quarried from the high parts of the park. The house is roofed and hung with Horsham tiles, while the walls are built of thicker flakes. ^(Pl.208) While it incorporates characteristic gables, dormers, tall chimneys with high pedimented decoration, stone mullions and curved, cut transoms (now removed), like those at Gateacre Grange (1883), the plan, with its offset wing and general asymmetry, is quite unprecedented in George and Peto's work. ^(Pl.209) The tower (1903), containing dining room, with its roof rising to a bell tower, recalls those employed at the villa for the Gaekwar of Baroda (1893) at Ootacamund, ¹⁰⁸ and the contemporary Crathorne Hall (1903-6), Yarm-on-Tees. ¹⁰⁹

Internally, the house is classical in feeling and undoubtedly by ^(Pl.210) Harold Peto. The hall, from which rises the staircase, leading to a balustraded landing the full length of the hall, is delicately detailed. The hooded fireplace anticipates those designed by Harold Peto for riviera villas executed after he left the practice. ^(Pl.45) Furthermore, the dining room, with its simple panelling and tripled arched windows evidence Peto. 'HAP' 1904 is signed in the plasterwork of the drawing room, which, with its delicately classical panelling and Corinthian pilasters, and distinctive Italian Renaissance fireplace, again anticipates his later villa work. ^{110 (Pl.211)}

The probable explanation for Peto's involvement after retirement, lies in Emma Henderson being a keen gardener. ¹¹¹ After her husband's death in 1893, she appears to have executed considerable alterations, including the formal garden, laid out to evoke a man-of-war with topiary portholes, bulwarks, quarterdeck, masthead and fortifications commanding fine views southwards across the Downs. The idea of likening the house and garden to a 'ship of the Royal Navy' was quaint, curious and idiosyncratic; the garden layout betrays something of the formalism advocated by Harold Peto.

In 1887, George and Peto designed Glencot, in Somerset, for W.S.Hodgkinson, on the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills, one and a

half miles from the Cathedral city of Wells and close to the caves of Wookey Hole, which owing to the unprecedented lowness of the River Axe, could be reached at certain times. ¹¹²

The client, William Sampson Hodgkinson JP, was the owner of the Wookey Hole Paper Mills and Caves on which the prosperity of the area largely depended. The church and village school were built under his aegis.

The steep slope of the site of Glencot was turned to advantage in a number of ways. The design allowed for the ground floor on the approach side to become an upper storey on the garden front. Furthermore, an arrangement of terraces and steps, with a stone bridge crossing the fast flowing river close by the house, served to create a relationship between the house and site ^(Pls 212 & 213) - one of the aims of Arts and Crafts architects.

The quiet Elizabethan style had no gratuitous decoration, its effectiveness was largely achieved by an adroit play of gables, windows, and string courses. ^(Pls. 214 & 215) In this respect, the house is a progenitor of the series of small country houses built the following year, 1888. At Glencot there is a lively grouping of complex gable articulations, as at Stoodleigh Court (1883); but here, there is much more vertical emphasis, enhanced by the tall chimneys and ranges of bay windows. The effect is sturdy, but appropriate to its position, the horizontality achieved at Stoodleigh would have been inappropriate. The use of Douling stone, used at Wells Cathedral, which tends to flake, attached a certain rustic, mellow romanticism to Glencot, captivated in the Royal Academy ^(Pl. 212) drawing ¹¹³. The rounded arches ¹¹⁴, forming deep recesses on the garden front, create an effect first used at Rousdon. Here they create dark accents which effectively enliven the garden front.

The interior of the house was illustrated in The English House, ¹¹⁵ ^(Pl. 216) in which photographs reveal the use of oak and walnut panelling, together with a gold embossed wallpaper similar to that in W.S. Gilbert's library in Harrington Gardens. George and Peto designed the fitted furniture, including a handsome fitted sideboard in the dining room with deep, practical drawers and characteristic Renaissance decoration. ^(Pl. 217) In the master bedroom there are fitted writing desk, dressing table and wardrobes, with Flemish pilasters. In general character, the interior decoration recalled that of houses in Collingham Gardens.

Glencot's restraint set the tone for houses of the late 1880s. The reticence of larger houses such as Redroofs, Streatham Common, George's own

house, built 1887-88 and Batsford, Gloucestershire (1888-90), becomes increasingly apparent in a whole series of smaller houses designed 1888-89. The Building News sensed this move away from the quaintly picturesque, misinterpreting it as 'rather a falling off, at least in these designs', although they conceded, 'Each of these is marked by Mr George's refined sense of the picturesque; but in none do we find any special indication of improvement upon the style of work produced in the past - in fact, the standard which he has caused us to judge him by demands, perhaps, more than is reasonable to expect'.¹¹⁶

The four houses illustrated at the Royal Academy in 1888 were a Country House, Champion Hill; Rosehill, Henley, Oxfordshire; a house at Bagshot, Surrey, and Eastcote Lodge, Pinner; they all reveal in some way, the move towards increased reticence and formality.

The house, built for Robert Martin,^(Pl.218) while retaining the vernacular panoply of red brick, gables with oak barge boards, modelled parquet work, plastered gables, and picturesque stable block with decorative clock tower, does show a more formalised treatment of fenestration, with wooden mullions and transoms to the casements, and the use of strong brick string courses and high carved pediments above the ground floor windows.

Rosehill, built for H.Micklam,^(Pl.219) to replace an older house on the same site which had recently been struck by lightning, shows a much tighter composition in red brick, with plastered gables, and steeply pitched roofs, grouped tautly around strongly coloured brick chimneys. This compact design is well suited to its rather restricted site on a platform in the hillside. A tall bay, rising to three storeys was ingeniously placed at the angle of the house, affording good views across the bend in the Thames. George and Peto had introduced a Venetian window in the centre gable, being linked on the garden front gable.

While the house at Champion Hill and Rosehill share some features taken from George and Peto's work of the early 1880s, the house built speculatively at Bagshot in Surrey, for G.D.Pollock^(Pl.218) relies upon absolutely plain brickwork and fenestration, straight gables and pronounced string courses for its effect, giving the appearance of an austere version of Cotswold vernacular. Of the four houses exhibited in 1888, it is the closest in style to Redroofs and Batsford, Further informality is introduced by the porch, with its wooden classical columns, and high pediment, unprecedented to date.

(P1.219)

Eastcote Lodge, Pinner, was built for L.J.Baker on his Haydon Hall Estate¹¹⁷. In 1885 Baker's son, Laurence Ingham married Harold Peto's sister, Helen Agnes; Eastcote lodge was for their occupation. It is the most formal of the four, being loosely Early Georgian with its symmetrical wings, Venetian windows and loggia. The brick pilasters which terminate the wings, with their Ionic capitals, under the gables, derive from those first used at Dunley Hill, Dorking (1887-88 and 1890). The house bears a striking resemblance to later work by Arnold Mitchell, who had worked for George and Peto as an assistant since 1883.¹¹⁸

Restraint was again the keynote of a house designed in 1889, (unidentified) for Charles Rose, in a choice position near the Thames, and close to Hardwick Court.^(P1.220) The L-shaped plan enclosing a raised terraced garden was presumably designed to meet the peculiarities of a hillside site. The style is kept plain, the straight gables, with ball finials and mullioned windows recalling those at Glencot. Particular attention is paid to the chimney stack, serving the billiard room inglenook. It is invested with an authority well suited to its function of anchoring the house to the falling hillside. A touch of intimacy is created by a small verandah formed under the slope of the roof. In March 1889, George travelled to Constantine and Algeria, and wrote to Peto from Algiers,

'Does C.Rose like the house or does he want something quite else? I daresay Bedford can keep the elevations somewhat unsettled so that I may get a turn at them before they conclude'. 119

Francis William Bedford (1866-1904) joined the office as an assistant in 1887. This comment by George suggests that the plan preceded the elevation as a working method. (See Chapter 9).

Increased sobriety is further evidenced by two houses designed in 1889 for William Severing Salting at Ascot.^(P1.221) One was built for his own occupation, the other as a speculation. Salting was the younger brother of George Salting, a well known art collector, and benefactor of the National Gallery and the British and South Kensington Museums. The brothers were of Danish origin, their father being a native of Copenhagen. George Salting spent his life accumulating the choicest treasure of art which came onto the market, and although he spent enormous sums, contrived to leave a fortune of over a million pounds.

W.S.Salting's own house¹²⁰, was well judged and rather chaste, closely following the lead of the house at Bagshot for G.D.Pollock. It

was studiously plain, although the arcaded loggia at the south-west corner was delicately handled. The adjoining house was deliberately different in style. Its large, but simple hipped roof, with small dormers, created the feeling of a large, comfortable farmhouse. Although loosely classical in idiom, the entrance front was quite asymmetrical, while the side elevations show the regularity of an eighteenth century design. As was the case at Dunley Hill (1887-88), and Eastcote Lodge (1888), the detailing was classical, each facade terminating with Ionic pilasters in brick. The prominent entrance bay, showed a mixture of Jacobean and classical elements. Although quite formal, this design displayed George and Peto's skill in capturing picturesque charm.

The village of Leigh, Kent (1886-89) and the Vernacular

In 1886, George and Peto were to renew their association with the Morley family. In 1870 Samuel Morley moved to Craven Lodge, Stamford Hill, to Hall Place, Leigh in Kent, which estate lay a mile and a half from Hildenborough Station, on the South Eastern Railway, four miles west of Tonbridge, and six south of Sevenoaks.

The old house, dating back to the Elizabethan period, was one of the main reasons why Morley was attracted to the estate. Finding it impossible to renovate satisfactorily and economically, Morley had the house demolished and rebuilt to the designs of George Devey. The present Hall Place (1870) is a somewhat dour Elizabethan style mansion which lacked Devey's customary charm.

Morley was well known for his involvement in the promotion of social and educational reform. After Foster's Education Act of 1870, he became one of four London members of the London School Board, where he would have met E.R. Robson and become conversant with the Queen Anne style, since it was adopted as the style for the Board.

It had long been a glaring evil that the cottage accommodation for agricultural labourers and their families in the rural districts was greatly deficient in quantity, and defective in quality, especially with regard to sanitation necessary for 'the moral and social well being of the occupants'.¹²¹ The provisions on the subject made by the Improvement of Land Act of 1864 had been found to be almost inoperative. Morley, in 1875 was instrumental, with Lord Shaftesbury, in forwarding a Bill to

amend the Act,

'to enable the public works loan Commissioners to make advances to the limited owners of entailed estates and other landowners, for the building, rebuilding and improvement of labourers cottages in rural districts. 122

Although the amendments were not carried, they serve to illustrate Morley's concern for housing conditions in rural areas ¹²³, and explain his work at Leigh. On first visiting the village, Morley found much needing attention. Gradually over the years, his improvements transformed the village. He relaid the drains and installed water fountains and troughs, and landscaped a recreation ground.

Devey designed the Evangelical Free Chapel with hall behind in 1871, in red and blue diapered brickwork, and the estate lodges described by John Newman as 'just the thing for pixies' ¹²⁴. Morley, clearly impressed by George and Peto's cottages in Chislehurst, designed for his son Charles in 1878, chose them to further develop his model village at Leigh. Morley's biographer E Hodder wrote,

'The cottages needed radical improvement: he had some reconstructed, and new ones built of a model type. The villagers had no ground to cultivate as gardens: he set aside a plot of land for the purpose, cut it up into sections, and let them at a low rate. Cottage gardening was at a discount: he offered prizes for the best kept gardens and plants, and gave his gardener carte blanche to supply, free of charge, trees and shrubs to ornament the cottage gardens. In short, he found it a neglected village, and, as the gradual work of years, he transformed it into one of the neatest and prettiest in the country'. 125

George and Peto's designs perfectly reflect this idealised notion of village life. ^(Pl. 220) The influence of Devey's work in Leicester Square, Penshurst (1850), with its mixture of Tudor buildings and additions, is clearly apparent in the group of cottages by George and Peto arranged around a green. They are confidently articulated and respectfully include local materials and local traditions, such as thatching and bargeboarding.

Samuel Morley died in September 1886, but his son Samuel Hope Morley ¹²⁶ continued the work at Leigh, commissioning George and Peto, in 1889, to design a second series of cottages, a range of village shops, and a convalescent home. A range of ten cottages were designed to form three sides of a quadrangle facing the road. The end cottages on the mainroad contained shops, one with an open arcade allowing the butcher to

to hang carcasses. The roofs of the wings were to be thatched, the remainder tiled. ¹²⁷ The Convalescent home was designed to replace a cottage receiving convalescent visitors from the poor parts of London.

Between 1886 and 1889, George and Peto designed other vernacular exercises, including Golden Mead, (1887), ^{128 (Pl.222)} to the east of Chislehurst Common, which showed a simple treatment of the vernacular paraphernalia of gables, tile-hanging and moderately pronounced chimneys. It is now surrounded by similar versions of the style by Ernest Newton.

The Red Cottage, ^(Pl.223) designed for Howard Gilliat in Harpenden, Hertfordshire in 1888. ¹²⁹, with its picturesque outline, long roof, large chimney, verandah and bay windows, clearly anticipated the Convalescent home at Leigh (1889). The roof and walls of Red Cottage were of red and grey oak shingle respectively, chosen because they were likely to weather well, and form a good contrast to the employment of red weather tiling, popular at the time. The picturesque effect of the exterior, with the verandah, long leaning gutter, and dovecot, ¹³⁰ was matched by the homeliness of the interior. ¹³¹

While employed by the Morleys in 1889, George and Peto received a commission from another well known nonconformist, William Henry Wills (1830-1911), later knighted and created Lord Winterstoke in 1906. A cousin of William Butterfield, William H. Wills was one of the well known family of Bristol Congregationalists more famous as the founder, in 1830, of W.D. and H.O. Wills, Tobacco Manufacturers. By the 1870s they were one of the richest families in Bristol, and reached further peaks of affluence in the Edwardian period. With increasing wealth came increased social and political power. In 1882, W.H. Wills purchased the Coombe Lodge Estate at Blagdon in Somerset, 'somewhat later he acquired one of his most treasured possessions, a large motor yacht named Sabrina' ¹³². He had originally planned to become a barrister, but, prevented by ill health, he turned to politics; following family tradition by becoming a Liberal member of the City Council, and was elected High Sheriff in 1877. In 1880, he semi-retired from business, in order to enter national politics as a Liberal MP for Coventry, a seat he held for six years. He received his baronetcy in 1893 for his public and political services. The major philanthropist of the family, he was a munificent benefactor of Bristol ¹³³, described by the Western Daily Press at the opening of the Bristol Art Gallery in 1905, as 'a local Mr Carnegie'. ¹³⁴

Clearly fond of the sea, Wills commissioned George and Peto in 1889 to design East Hill, in a prominent position, close to the sea between Ramsgate and Broadstairs at St Lawrence-at-Sea.^{135 (Pl. 221)} Planned as a tight double pile, with ample hall and staircase to be used as a living area, it had morning, dining and drawing rooms, in addition to a study and billiard room. The exposed site gave rise to a number of interesting features. In style, the house was a fairly simple, gabled arrangement with tall chimneys but the picturesque, overhanging storeys were not merely attractive, but served to shelter the windows beneath, which were formed into bays to admit maximum light and afford the best views. The ground floor was red brick, but small, thick greenweather slates, similar to those found on old German gables, were used for the upper storeys for added protection. In addition, the walls were hollow, like those at Littlecroft (1884), in the New Forest, to prevent dampness.

Internally the detail was of a high quality.¹³⁶ The buffet in the dining room was designed by George and Peto to match the panelling and carved fireplace. The morning room had high wood panelling in narrow widths, two sides were occupied by glazed bookcases with leaded lights, also to George and Peto's design.

In 1890, Harold Peto wrote to the Earl of Onslow, concerning the proposed Warren Farm House to be designed in a rather formal, classical style,

'I am obliged for your kind note. Let me know when you will be in town please that we may consider the little farm house which we shall have much pleasure in looking into for you. We happen to be slack at the moment and so could give it our best personal attention. If therefore you could let us have particulars as early as possible I should be glad as we hope to be much busier directly'.¹³⁷

The only new houses 'on the books' in 1890, appear to be Poles, Hertfordshire for E. S. Hanbury, and Limmerslease, Compton, near Guildford, for the painter G. F. Watts.¹³⁸

Watts had Frederick Cockerell design him 'new' Little Holland house in Melbury Road in 1876.¹³⁹ , but after an illness Watts spent a winter at Monksthatch, near Guildford with his friends Andrew and Mary Hitchins.¹⁴⁰ . Mary Watts recalls,

'The winter months as they passed found (Watts) so well that the idea of a winter home in the neighbourhood - a cottage, perhaps to which a studio could be added - was constantly in our minds'.¹⁴¹

Andrew Hitchens found a site, 'a little sandy knoll, well wooded and possessed of some very fine trees' ¹⁴² on Hogs' Back, Compton, which he duly bought and rented it to, 'the beloved little man'. ¹⁴³ Hitchens might well have suggested George on the strength of work in Guildford ¹⁴⁴. The compact nature of the house, with studio, drawing and dining rooms, reveals that it was intended to be a retreat. ^(Pl.224) Watts at this time was at odds with 'the artistic lion hunter', ¹⁴⁵ Mrs Barrington, his neighbour in Melbury Road, and it was Mary Watts's probable intention to build a house removed from, yet within easy reach of London. Watts kept up the house in Melbury Road, but spent an increasing amount of his time at Guildford.

The studio, which extended the full depth of the house, had beneath it the canvas room (with garden door and lavatory), so taking advantage of the sloping site. The simple hipped roof of heather thatch creates a comfortable, barnlike appearance in the Royal Academy drawing of 1890. Originally to be built of Bargate stone from a neighbouring quarry, with oak quartering above, the extant house is of red brick, and is rather ponderous and bereft of charm. The Watts named the house Limnerslease, combining 'Limner', to keep the remembrance that it was built for an artist, and 'Lease', loosely derived from 'leasen', to 'glean', 'our hope' wrote Mary, was 'that there were golden years to be gleaned in this new house'. ¹⁴⁶ W.S.Blunt, when sitting for his portrait in 1899, described it as,

'an ornamental, not too ornamented cottage of the usual Victorian kind, which he had christened 'Limnerlease', much to his friends' amusement... Burne-Jones used to call it 'Dauber's Den', 'Painter's Palette', and other nicknames'. ¹⁴⁷

While at Compton, Mary Watts became very active in 'The Home Arts and Industries Association', an organisation in which Watts himself became involved, she being chiefly concerned with the aesthetic side of the work, he, with its moral value. Mary naturally wished that Compton might play its part in this revival of village handicrafts. Discovering a fine bed of clay in the grounds of Limnerslease she decided pottery was the craft to be introduced. When in 1895, the Compton Parish Council decided that there was no space left in the churchyard for further burials and acquired a new plot on rising land not far from the house, Mary decided to provide a mortuary chapel designed by herself, and

carried out with terra-cotta decorations made under her supervision by villagers at evening classes, a kiln having been set up. The structure was completed in 1898 and dedicated to the Bishop of Winchester.

These building enterprises, and arts and crafts ventures, appear to have been a drain on Watts's income, and he was obliged to sell works. He wrote to James Smith, a keen collector of his paintings, in November 1898,

'You shall have 'Chaos' for 600 -it is a favourite of my wife's and we have been unwilling to sell it; but she wants to build a lodge for a caretaker at the Chapel, and I want to make a beginning in the shape of a memorial to the heroes of everyday life, a desire I have long had...All this makes' it very necessary, as you may suppose, to sell a picture or two'. 148

Possibly linked to the building of the lodge, was the commissioning of George and Yeates, in 1898, ¹⁴⁹ to design a group of four cottages at Compton, for Watts. These cottages, under a simple sheltering roof whose ends are carried down to the level of the ground floor ceiling (thereby covering an extra room at either end), make respectful references to local vernacular traditions. ^(Pl.225) They are of pegged frame construction, with extensive use of external joinery. The bracketing on the front elevation bears a striking resemblance to a traditional farmhouse at Compton, drawn in 1889, and illustrated in Ralph Nevill's Old Cottage and Domestic Architecture. ¹⁵⁰ This was a feature also employed by Lutyens in the deeply undercut verandah, on the south side of Fulbrook House, Thursley, Surrey, in 1896 ¹⁵¹. George's cottages have an isolated outbuilding at the rear, enclosing two earth closets, placed axially. Built of elm boards on an oak frame, with prominent pegging, the tiled roof neatly completed with a square ogee finial, sheathed in lead. Such features were also favoured by Lutyens. While the tall, arched chimneys are characteristic of George, the roughcast brickwork and porches recall Voysey.

Rumour holds that George omitted to provide a staircase from first to second floor at Limnerlease ¹⁵², which perhaps accounts for the firm being passed over for the design of the Watts Chapel in the early 1900s. ¹⁵³

London Work of the Early 1890s

Fashionable London life in the 1890s and early 1900s saw a scramble for social recognition, since there were so many more moneyed people enjoying the social delights of town. As a consequence, a number of big town houses were built in sought-after parts of London, whether for rent, sale, or for the occupants themselves. Over two hundred new peerages were created by the monarch between 1890-1914, and of the new millionaires or professionals, more than a third came from commerce or industry¹⁵⁴, disregarding baronetcies and knighthoods. Houses grew up on, and around, the Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair - from Berkeley Square to Green Street and Park Lane, in styles ranging from Neo-Flemish, Neo-Elizabethan, Neo-Loire to the later Neo-Georgian, designed by architects such as H.O. Cresswell, Detmar Blow, Fernand Billerey, Eustace Balfour, Thackeray Turner, Sir Robert Edis, as well as George.

Much of the work in London executed in the early 1890s suggests that Harold Peto might have had the upper hand, especially since a number of commissions involved extensive interior decoration. In his admiration for all things Italian, Peto anticipated the cult for Italy, which gave rise to the Italian garden in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Admiration for Italy was an American, rather than English phenomenon. In the United States Italian gardens were to complement the opulent Italian Renaissance style of decoration, which never really took root in England¹⁵⁶. Peto had travelled extensively in Italy, throughout his life. Visits are recorded to Pisa, Florence, Siena, Orvieto, and Assisi in 1887, Venice, Torcello, Verona, and Lake Como in 1888, and Urbino, Parma, Piacenza and Milan in 1889. He was to write,

'O, Italy, you do contain delights little realised by those who stay at home'¹⁵⁷.

A preference for Italian style can be detected as early as 1878, when the hall at 6 Grosvenor Place was painted in 'the Early Italian manner'¹⁵⁸, and also in work at Osmaston Manor in 1886. In 1890, the redecoration of 6 Carlton House Terrace, for C.H. Stanford was to allow Peto free rein. Stanford had been unhappy with the previous 'undignified'¹⁵⁹ staircase arrangements which had lacked style,¹⁶⁰ and employed George and Peto to reconstruct that whole part of the house. They created a magnificent marble staircase, with balustrades and wall linings. They were to redecorate the rest of the house.

The carving and detailing in the hall was fifteenth century Italian in style. A selection of fine tapestries of the early sixteenth century were hung above the marble staircase on the landing. The doorways, opening out onto the staircase were all of white statuary and the pilasters carved with delicate Raphaelesque detailing and the doors themselves inlaid with rich intarsia work. The ceiling of the grand staircase was coffered with wood and gessowork in blue and gold, the coffers filled with a star shaped flower, the petals of which were of pearl shells.

The entrance hall (38' x 25'), was lined entirely with marble having large panels of pink soudanese, divided by statuary pilasters carved with Renaissance detail. The chimneypiece was carved by George Frampton, from marble, in a fifteenth century Italian style, with a frieze about three feet wide, showing boys with garlands. The dining room was fully lined with mahogany, its deep frieze of carved panels, partly gilt, was in Henry II style. The finish was expensive, the margins of the lower panels being inlaid with satin wood, and a wooden coffered ceiling with a central portion domed and decorated with finely modelled figures in ivory colour, on a gold background.

On the first floor, the library and drawing room (38' x 25' and 50' x 25' respectively). The lower portion of the former was panelled with Italian walnut in François Premier style, and part of the walls to the height of the panelling, had bookcases matching the dado. The walls above were covered with gilded leather, and the ceiling coffered with walnut inlaid in panels and framed with boxwood. The drawing room was Palladian in style, the panels of the ceiling being infilled with paintings, and the walls divided by pilasters, with panels of grey and gold brocade between. The gold was used in sufficiently broad masses to avoid an unnecessary and tasteless effect.

The walls of two bathrooms were completely lined with elaborate, yet subdued, cloisonné enamel, used elsewhere in the house to good effect, above low marble dados. One bathroom had pomegranates, oleander, and orange tree decoration, while the other was Japanese in idiom, with lotus plants, fish and storks depicted. This delicate work was executed by J. Starkie Gardner, who was to become one of George's regular craftsmen. 161

Bush and Sons, of Ridgemount Street, were the contractors, and Collinson and Lock, the decorators. The whole was completed in eight months.

In 1894, The Architect remarked,

'One of the signs of the times is the alteration which is taking place in some of the dignified but dull streets of Mayfair and other parts of the West of London'.

The alterations

'take many forms, from painting a hall door in vermilion, white or ultramarine, and introducing a capacious parlour window, to transformation of a whole front. The improvement that is feasible by a moderate outlay will be plain to anyone who compares the house shown in the plate with those adjoining it, which are survivals of that naked and severe but grimy simplicity which was supposed to be the most suitable characteristic for the town residence of an English gentleman'. 162

The house in the plate was 40 Berkeley Square designed by George and Peto for William Severing Salting.¹⁶³ The facade,

'solidly treated in a Burgundian type of Renaissance, with pilasters along the entire facade in two separated stages ranging with the windows', 164

displayed a good measure of French inspired detail, and again suggests the influence of Harold Peto. (Pls. 226 & 227)

At ground floor, the windows were spaced irregularly to fit the necessities of the rooms. The large area of wall space between first and second floors, arising from the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the drawing room behind, effectively highlights the rich decoration elsewhere on the facade. Internally, a wide hall, with marble pillars, led to the grand staircase. Now destroyed, number 40 was the penultimate house to be built by the Peto Brothers. (Pl. 228)

George and Peto further improved the square when in 1891, they executed rebuilding work and decoration at number 47, for Edward Steinkopff, Managing Director, though not the actual discoverer of, Apollinaris mineral water.¹⁶⁵ This enterprising son of a Lutheran pastor from Mecklenburgh in Germany, drifted on the floodtide of financial achievement onto the famous square. Peto found Steinkopff, one time proprietor of the St James Gazette, 'a vulgar, exacting nouveau riche', from 'the bottom of a horse pond'.¹⁶⁶

George and Peto's original design for the facade, with enclosed stone porch, was vetoed by the London County Council in January 1891, 'since an objection was raised as to the character proposed'.¹⁶⁷ This remains a mystery. Permission to execute a revised design in April 1891 was granted and the facade was remodelled in a fifteenth century manner by J. Simpson & Son, to designs most probably informed by Harold Peto.

The dining room^{168 (Pl.229)} was in Henri II style, as at 6 Carlton House Terrace. Since this long room was to be approached from a breakfast room, it was desirable to have the door centrally in the end wall, for the sake of the vista; it was therefore in the middle of an arcaded screen and sideboard designed by George and Peto. The walls above the panelling were covered with silk, the ceiling plaster. The music room on the first floor had walls wholly panelled in white woodwork, with richly carved caps separating the panels. The hall and staircase had walls lined with Cipollinio marble in reversed slabs, while the columns and arches on the drawing room landing were of Paronazzo marble. The old staircase was preserved, since George and Peto felt it had interesting ironwork.

Further work was undertaken in Berkeley Square, at number 11, for Vernon J. Watney, who succeeded the Earl of Clarendon in residence there.¹⁶⁹ The nature and extent of the work is unclear.

The last house built by Peto Brothers was The Yellow House, 8 Palace Court, Bayswater, designed in 1892 by George and Peto for Harold's great friend Percy Macquoid (1852-1926). Their longstanding friendship was deepened by a shared professional interest in interior design and the collecting of furniture, particularly early English oak. Macquoid, an accomplished writer on furniture history¹⁷⁰, shared a sense of humour with Peto. A portrait exists of Peto dressed as Hamlet, painted by Macquoid¹⁷¹. When Macquoid married in 1891, Peto was his best man.

The house was situated almost opposite Palace Gardens, not far from J.J. Stevenson's Red House, 1871. Macquoid's house, by contrast, was conspicuous for its yellow terra-cotta.¹⁷² George's design, a very simple evocation of Tudor, with a big central bay, squarely treated, dominating the facade, was further enhanced by his exploitation of the qualities of smoothness and colour offered by terra-cotta.^(Pl.230) An iron gateway gave onto a quiet, paved courtyard, with a sundial in the centre.

Internally, the house posed the problem of George's own house, Redroofs - that of providing a setting for a varied collection of furniture and objets d'art, and as was the case at Redroofs, the simplicity of the exterior was well judged to foil the richness of the interior. Much of the interior scheme probably owes as much to Macquoid, as to fellow collectors George and Peto.

The street door to the left, led into a long, low, dimly lit hall, opening into the dining room to the right. One of the unusual features of the house, was the degree to which older specimens of panelling, carving,

and detailing, were incorporated. The hall, for instance, was panelled on one side with old oak collected from various parts of England. The panels were of different designs of the old Gothic linen fold pattern, dating from the middle to end of the fifteenth century. The carved oak doors and steel work of the hinges were all of the same period. The overmantel and panelling on the opposite wall were also of oak, but of a different date. The overmantel was a richly carved piece, with niches and statues taken from a church in South Germany, dating from the sixteenth century.

An absence of superfluous decoration is observed throughout the house, in order to display items advantageously. The staircase wells were hung with stamped Cordova leather of the seventeenth century, and kept free of paintings or other ornamentation. At the far end of the hall, a door led into the studio, a lofty room with large top and side light. Before reaching the first floor, a handsomely carved oak door, taken from Chichester Cathedral, led into Mrs Macquoid's boudoir. A comfortable room by all accounts, the boudoir had walls lined to within two or three feet of the ceiling, with carved walnut panelling from a labourer's cottage at Didcot, above which Macquoid painted a freize. As in George and Peto's own houses, circlets of painted glass were introduced into the boudoir; leaded lights, in this case Swiss, added to the mediaeval ambience. On the first floor, the high stone archway which opened into the drawing room, had featured in Owen Jones's History of Ornament, and belonged in all possibility to a set made by the Venetian government.

A feature was made of the drawing room, which occupied the whole of the first floor, having enormous dimensions, (some 40' x 18'), and decorated in the style of Francis I. The oak beams supporting the ceiling, through the modern craftsmanship, carried out the old mediaeval plan of construction. The panelling of the walls was brought from Foulescombe in Devon, from a house found derelict by Macquoid. The carved stone fireplace was brought from a Venetian palace, probably by Harold Peto. The drawing room, like George's studio at Redroofs, dominated the plan and provided a reticent, yet dramatic, setting for the display of a collection.¹⁷³

More in keeping with George and Peto's oeuvres of the early 1880s was 7 Delahay Street, Westminster, designed in 1892-93¹⁷⁴ for R.J. Crawshay.^(Pl. 231) The site was a restricted corner position, which necessitated the house being divided at ground floor level, by a public passage to the park. George and Peto concocted a picturesque L-shaped block, recalling the Jacques Coeur house at Bourges. They placed a circular turret in the

interangle of the front and wing elevations. Internally, the first floor housed a music room, which occupied the collective height of the adjoining first and second floor rooms, which accounted for the long windows.

The South London Art Gallery 1891-93

In South London, one third of the Metropolitan population was crowded into one tenth of the space in the entire city. From statistics compiled from records of the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street, originally founded by Revd F.D. Maurice, ¹⁷⁵ it became clear that a Working Men's College was desirable in South London, as it was from this area that the majority of Great Ormond Street students had been drawn during the twelve years of its existence, 1854-66. In 1868, the South London Working Men's College was founded. ¹⁷⁶ In 1878, the first Free Library was added to it and in 1879, the first Art Gallery.

The present South London Art Gallery, Peckham Road, Camberwell, was initiated by a William Rossiter who wished to share with others the benefits he had received from Great Ormond Street tutelage. He had earlier lent books, and shown pictures with relevant explanations, to members of the public. These activities grew to such an extent that he bought Lion House in Camberwell, with the object of starting an Art Gallery. Though unable to achieve his goal individually, prominent figures in the world of the Arts became interested. After a meeting held on the 18 July at the Royal Society of British Artists, in Suffolk Street, chaired by Henry Irving, the idea was projected for raising 'a considerable sum' for the purpose. Subscribers included Lord Rothschild, Sir Frederick Leighton, Bart, G.F. Watts, RA, and the Duke of Westminster.

Despite continuing financial difficulties, the New Gallery was opened on 4 May 1891, built by Foster and Dicksee of Rugby, from plans by Godfrey Pinkerton. The porch and entrance hall were built by Mr Goad of Camberwell Road from plans by William Rossiter, then Treasurer, based on a suggestion by Ernest George. The latter's involvement and interest is easily accountable. He was, throughout his career, interested in education, and would have been particularly sympathetic to any scheme which would have benefitted his native area. He had also been employed by G.F. Watts in Surrey.

The New Gallery was behind Lion House, adjoining Portland House. Much of the fabric of the building was donated. The parquet floor was laid by Messrs Steinitz and Co. of Camberwell, who presented as a gift, the large ornamental centre designed by Walter Crane. The wallpaper on the upper part of the Gallery was made specially, and donated by Messrs W. Woollams and Co., High Street, Manchester Square; while the paper on the walls and staircase of the side rooms was the gift of Messrs Jeffreys and Co., Essex Road, Islington. The large room of the New Gallery, 70' x 34', was modelled upon the large room of the New Gallery in Regent Street. There were two side rooms, 70' x 10'. The entrance hall was the gift of an anonymous donor, at a cost of £350, in memory of Sidney Gilchrist Thomas.

A separate entrance was provided into the small lecture room, which was a portion of Portland House. The Japanese leather and paper covering the walls was donated by Messrs Woollams and Co. The cost of the Gallery and building, with the freehold site, was about £7,000, of which about £3,000 was owing in 1891. The annual expense of the Gallery was about £600 for which the Council relied entirely upon voluntary contributions. Leading figures in the art world, including Leighton, Watts, George, Frampton and Crane, as well as Sir H. Beerbohm Tree continued to help unsparingly. In order to continue to meet rising expenditure, Sir Frederick Leighton, then President of the Royal Academy, applied to the London Parochial Charities Trustees for a grant. This was proffered, and the Trust, from that point, observed activities of the Gallery.

Further development took place in 1892. The necessity for further space must have been adumbrated in the casual talks of visitors, for at the annual meeting of that year, the newspaper publisher Passmore Edwards,¹⁷⁷ who was amongst other things, the proprietor of the Building News, announced through Sir John Lubbock, that, as the trustees included the President of the Royal Academy, he would donate the sum of £3,000 to build an additional art gallery. Donations were also received, notably £1,000 from Mr Pyke Thompson of Cardiff, and money from Mrs Percy Thompson of Battersea, to build a lecture hall and reading room. (P1.232)

George designed the new lecture hall and reading room, the foundation stone of which was laid in March 1893, by G.F. Watts, in a rare public appearance. The lecture hall, reading room, and art gallery were opened,¹⁷⁸ by the Prince of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of York.

The lecture hall, 80' x 34' had a hammerbeam roof and a speaker's platform and dais. Above the platform, on a roof beam was carved the motto, 'Work in faith - faith in work'¹⁷⁹. Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Chairman of the Gallery in 1894,¹⁸⁰ stated in his annual report,¹⁸¹

'that the Gallery was the pioneer of the opening of museums on Sunday, that it heralded a movement that has the support of the entire thinking classes, and that an influential deputation will shortly wait upon the Prime Minister to urge the desirability of throwing open the doors of the South Kensington Museum on Sundays'.¹⁸²

Education generally, and technical education in particular, were under public review in the mid 1890s, and as Exchequer grants were available, the Vestry of Camberwell - the parent of Camberwell Borough Council, conscious of the shortcomings of their area, especially with regard to art education, felt that their case merited consideration and placed their problem before the Technical Education Board of the London County Council.

At the same time the Trustees of the two galleries, envisaging a bigger field for their work than a private venture would allow, arranged for the transfer of their property to the Vestry in 1896. The picture gallery, lecture hall, and museum, were fronted by Lion House facing Peckham Road, and when public pressure to utilise the site of Lion House for Further Education became insistent, Passmore Edwards generously offered funds with which to build an art school. The Technical Education Board of the London County Council agreed to establish a School of Arts and Crafts in the new building. The architect was Maurice B. Adams, the Editor of Passmore Edwards's Building News.¹⁸³ His design was ^(P1.233) in the Classical Free Style, popular at the time. The School was further extended in 1902-03.¹⁸⁴

Three Commissions Abroad

In 1887, Harold Peto travelled to New York, Boston, Newport, Washington, Philadelphia and Quebec. In Boston he dined and stayed with Isabella Stewart Gardner¹⁸⁵ at Brookline. He recalls in his diary that he persuaded her to show him her jewel collection 'as I am fond of seeing such beauties', he added,

'She amused herself by throwing them across the room to me to catch, as she said they sparkled better when flying through the air than at any other time; I was relieved when

she stopped, as I was afraid of missing them. She is a really extraordinary woman, does everything that mortal can, has read everything, knows everyone, has great taste and is withal extraordinarily kind, and puts herself to no end of trouble for you'. 186

In 1891-92 Mrs Gardner commissioned George and Peto to design a large openwork screen which she was donating to the Church of the Advent, Brimmer Street - at Mount Vernon Street and at the foot of Beacon Hill, Boston. The church had been designed in 1875-76 by Sturgis and Brigham. After Sturgis's death in 1888, it was completed by R. Clipston Sturgis, in association with Henry Vaughan, who designed the pulpit and supervised the design of the west window. Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, designed the interior of the Lady Chapel, and much of the interior decoration. From the outset, the church had a high altar and reredos designed by Sturgis, and presented by Mrs Gardner. George and Peto's stone screen, ^(Pl. 234) executed by Farmer and Brindley ¹⁸⁷, was placed above the high altar reredos with a narrow passage behind it, bridged by arched wings, which lent rigidity to the open screen. The openwork turrets at the sides, terminate with figures of Mary and the Angel of the Annunciation, and under canopies are six other figures representing St Francis of Assisi, St Barbara, St Sebastian, St George, St Catherine of Siena and St Augustine. The nature of the commission demonstrates George and Peto's versatility.

A second commission for a villa in Cannes, in 1891, La Rinconada, ^(Pl. 235) was unexecuted on account of the untimely death of the client, W. Perch of Cardiff, but nevertheless holds some significance for Harold Peto's future architectural practice. The simple Tuscan style, with its big brick arches, widely overhanging eaves, and broad space beneath which was to have formed a frieze in sgraffito work, suggests the influence of Harold Peto, who was to develop an extensive garden and villa practice, working much in the South of France. Peto's later villas, however, were ^(Pls 44-47) to assume a much purer Italianate style.

The third, quite unprecedented commission, was to design a villa for ^(Pl. 236) the Gaekwar of Baroda at Ootacamund in the Nilgiri Hills in India. Although published in 1893, work must have been well under way by October 1892. ¹⁸⁸ Two reasons possibly account for the relatively English treatment of the house. Firstly, the Gaekwar was well supplied with oriental Palaces, and desired a mountain retreat which embodied

certain features which had captured his imagination in English precedents. Secondly, the location might well have influenced the idiom. Ootacamund was, by 1892, one of the leading hill stations, and capital of a chain of resorts in the Nilgiri or Blue Hills, at the northern end of the Madras State. Dubbed 'Snooty Ooty', it became the Queen of the South, as Simla was Queen of the North. Adopted at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a summer house by British officials and planters in South India, Ootacamund came to be occupied by Indian Maharajahs, and the Governors of Madras made it their summer resort, building a Government house there. One of them, the Duke of Buckingham, brought his English penchant for gardening with him. The climate in the hills was conducive with temperatures of 50/60°, and with gentle rain on the green downs, it was reminiscent of Devon or Yorkshire. Lord Lytton, Viceroy from 1876 until 1880, staying in Government House, wrote to his wife,

'it far surpasses all that its most enthusiastic admirers and devoted lovers have said to us about it. The afternoon was rainy and the road muddy, but such beautiful English rain; such delicious English mud. Imagine Hertfordshire lanes, Devonshire downs, Westmorland lakes, Scotch trout streams, and Lusitanian views!' 189

The Victorians, enchanted by their discovery, developed 'Ooty'; building houses of all types, all inclining wistfully towards England - Apple Cottage, Cheerful Cottage; more grandly Woodcote Hall, and Squires Hall. Some houses had romantic, literary godparents, Kenilworth and Bleak House. Others were geographically allusive like Harrow-on-the-Hill and Grasmere Lodge.

Some of the earlier, affluent houses, built by Nabobs who preferred to retire to 'Ooty', thinking that they had struck the next thing to an Indian Utopia, had imposing front verandahs, upheld by stately classical columns. One or two were designed on the hillsides facing the sun, in passable colonial imitation of the Greek. The architectural style which predominated was that of the 1860s, the period of 'Ooty's' greatest development; the predominating colour, terra-cotta. In a style that flourished in the quiet streets of Putney or Harrow, the difference in India, being that the houses were sawn off, mostly to one storey - cottage height - and have the elusive flavour of the Swiss Chalet or the Cuckoo Clock.

Into this setting George and Peto presented their brick and stone villa, in an old English style, but with customary sociable references to locality, in this case a rather delicate and subtle use of Hindu detailing - all very restrained and well behaved, as befitted the commission. Characteristic chimneys were combined with a tower, like those at Sedgwick Park (1886),¹⁹⁰ Cawston (1896)¹⁹¹ and Crathorne Hall (1903-06),¹⁹² and another, more Hindu inspired offering. The design had to be built on the spacious lines of British India, designed to shut out the blazing sun, and encourage cool cross-currents of air. A long arcaded verandah, a ladies' verandah, and a long covered arcaded passage, leading to service quarters, and square open air dining pavilion, ensured that all ranks were cool. The dining pavilion, with its pitched roof and Hindu style cupola, and indigenous carving on the struts supporting the wide overhanging eaves, created a traditional note.

George and Peto continued the English tradition of freeing the reception rooms, all important in such a house with its social responsibilities, from traffic, and so the covered passage from service quarters to dining room was continued as a subway to serve the ladies' room.

This commission led to more prestigious work in 1914 for the design of Shirpur Palace at Indore, for the Maharajah Holkar, and associated houses for the Aides-de-Camp, both by George and Yeates.

The villages of Buscot and Eaton Hastings, Berkshire

In 1889, Alexander Henderson (d 1934), a financier of exceptional skill, celebrated engineer, connoisseur, and amateur of painting, bought the Buscot Park Estate, Berkshire. The house had been built shortly before 1780, by Edward Lovenden Townsend,¹⁹³ who employed his own architect. The character of the house and estate was to change dramatically, when it was sold to a wealthy Australian, Robert Tertius Campbell. A progressive and original thinker, Campbell sank large sums of money in an unsuccessful enterprise to produce Cognac, from sugar beet on the estate. All that survive of the buildings that he erected are a long range of stables for the cows who were to complete the economic cycle, by consuming the residue of crushed beet.¹⁹⁴ As early as 1859 Campbell had commissioned a gabled and towered Elizabethan mansion of vast size.

Happily it was not built, but additions were made; the original parapet was replaced by a more grandiloquent one, and dormers were added. The original double staircase was replaced with a clumsy entrance porch.

Alexander Henderson was to add a bachelors' wing to the west of the house,¹⁹⁵ and commission two village estates. Model villages in connection with Berkshire estates were not uncommon. The earliest was probably Leverton, near Hungerford, where five pairs of thatched cottages were built c.1900. East Lockinge, the Wantage estate village, where balancing rows of cottages on a slope, planted with cypresses, were built c.1840. Stockcross was another mid-Victorian and early twentieth century estate, with estate cottages thatched and timbered, with a shop in the same style. Sindleham Green, the model village at the gates of Bearwood, built for the Walters family, proprietors of The Times, included a church (1864), and houses and inn (c.1869). In the early 1890s Henderson was to build Buscot and Eaton Hastings villages. (Pl.237)

In 1892 a drawing of twelve cottages by George and Peto was exhibited at the Royal Academy¹⁹⁶. These were one of three groups of buildings about a mile apart, which form the parish, rather than the village, of Eaton Hastings. Arranged around three sides of a square, grouped around a central seat and well, the style was simple, unpretentious Old English, with low, mullioned windows, drawing from the neighbouring Cotswold vernacular, having ball and wirepin ornaments on the top and feet of the gables. The Builder remarked, 'they are simple enough ornament, undoubtedly, but just a little worn out'.¹⁹⁷ symptomatic of contemporary opinion of George's later work. The cottages stand on the main Faringdon-Lechlade Road, where it runs through the plantations of Buscot Park. George and Peto also designed the Georgian-style shop.

By October 1892, progress had also been made at Buscot village, where George and Peto were designing cottages, forge, and village room, again in a Cotswold style.^(Pl.238) By 1897 George and Peto had laid out most of the village as a model settlement. Many of the estate villages in Berkshire were conceived on the eighteenth century principle of rows, but Eaton Hastings and Buscot, together with Sindleham Green and Sulham, were arranged in irregular, picturesque groupings.

At the turn of the century, Harold Peto was commissioned to extend and improve the park at Buscot, the most notable feature being the long formal walk connecting the house with the twenty acre lake, which lay

at a lower level to the north-east of the house. The walk consists of a chain of stairways, paths and pools for the greater part of its length cut through a wood, and enclosed by clipped yew and box hedges.

Buscot and Eaton Hastings were the last villages to be built by George and Peto, but George was to contribute to two further village schemes at Port Sunlight, Merseyside (1898-1901) and Whiteley, Surrey (1914-21).

CHAPTER 5: THE COUNTRY HOUSES OF GEORGE AND PETO

Dunley Hill, Dorking, Surrey (1887-88 and 1890)

Plans must have been afoot for the building of a house on the Effingham Hall Estate in Surrey for Admiral Frederick Augustus Maxse (1833-1900) late in 1886, since a first set of plans dated December 1886 are extant.¹

Maxse had, by this time, enjoyed a distinguished naval career, retiring as Admiral in 1867 to pursue interests in social, political and literary spheres. He is perhaps best known as a friend and correspondent of George Meredith, the novelist.

Maxse's family had been West Indian merchants, and his grandfather, an accountant, had owned a number of ships, five of which were engaged in the American war (1775- 83). Maxse's father John, an Oxford graduate and wealthy Tory, had married Lady Caroline Fitzhardinge, daughter of the 5th Earl of Berkeley.

In 1862 Maxse married Cecilia Steel and in 1867, on retiring from the Navy, bought the Holly Hill Estate in Surrey from Lord Cholmondeley. He was appointed Retired Rear Admiral in 1875.

The remarkable friendship between Maxse and Meredith, which spanned some forty, uninterrupted years until Maxse's death in 1900, appears to have arisen through the Admiral having written a novel entitled Robert Mornay, which was sent by publishers for Meredith to read. In 1859, Meredith moved from Chelsea to Esher where their friendship developed. Through their correspondence, a clear picture of Maxse emerges, as one who was aristocratic, autocratic, but at the same time, fanciful and mercurial.

'The current fad, whatever that was, swept him away like a matchstick in a millrace'. 2

In their early years of friendship, the two men shared radical political opinions, and when Maxse tried for Parliament at Southampton in 1868, Meredith campaigned with him for two months. The attempt was unsuccessful, as was that at Tower Hamlets in 1874. Maxse's

'extremism, his rejection of any attempt at making a deal, made him an incurably improbable practising politician'. 3

Meredith delighted in the 'grand Seigneur' side of Maxse's character.

'Maxse was a man who could so easily be seen as a model for the Carlylean hero. And Meredith, like so many of his generation, was greatly influenced by Carlyle. Meredith also, like so many radical levellers of his own, as well as of other generations, dearly loved a lord, or someone on the lordly fringes. Maxse was handsome. He cut a fine figure. He had a womanizing side to him too'.⁴

Meredith is said to have based the central character of his novel Beauchamps Career, upon Maxse. The novel is the study of the combat in a man of his hereditary aristocratic instincts and passions, with a sincere, if rather hysterical, realization of the wrongs and needs of a democracy with various personal feuds and fads as corollaries, all of which mirror aspects of Maxse's character.

Maxse was a restless wanderer, he never stayed long in one place and his marriage to Cecelia Steel, despite preliminary Meredithian counselling, was an unhappy one. The two somehow stayed together for sixteen years before separating in 1878. After his mother's death in 1886⁵, and his inheritance of the Effingham Hall Estate near Dorking, Maxse promptly sold much of this family property, and set about building a somewhat modest house on the remaining nine acre site.

George and Peto were likely to have been selected on account of their reputation, and the Effingham Hall Estate bordered the Clandon Park Estate (Discussed in Chapter 2). But there is the possibility that Meredith was the agent. He was a great friend of Mr and Mrs H. Seymour Trower, styled 'Gondolier' and 'Lady Blytheway' respectively, in memory of water parties held on the Wey. The Seymour Trowers bought Bridge House, Weybridge in 1890, subsequently employing⁶ Harold Peto to design extensive gardens and water gardens. In a letter to Mrs Seymour Trower of 1897, Meredith wrote,

'Pete, is well, my day long companion, the pet of everybody'.⁷

Pete being a daschund given to Meredith by Harold Peto. When in New York in 1887, Peto 'Dined on Sunday evening with Manton Marble, Maxse's friend'.⁸

The style chosen for Dunley Hill^(P1.239) was Queen Anne and of importance because significantly few new Queen Anne country houses were built.⁹ As Mark Girouard points out, Queen Anne failed

to make more than a marginal impact on the country house world for three main reasons. It was not considered dignified enough; its image was too much a middle class one; and it was thought of as a town style, for no very good reason except that the first 'Queen Anne' buildings to come to the public notice had been in London'. 10

Many of the attempts at Country House Queen Anne were somewhat unexciting. In the attempt to make the style significantly dignified, the more fanciful elements were omitted and accent was placed on symmetry. As a consequence, the results tended towards fairly straightforward imitations of seventeenth century houses, such as Raynham or Swakeleys, an example being Woodcote Hall, Shropshire (1876), by Frederick Pepys Cockerell, a fringe member of Queen Anne circles, and architect of G.F. Watts's house in Melbury Road, London (1876).

George and Peto's excursions into Queen Anne have been discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Of interest was the element of Queen Anne massing at Buchan Hill, Sussex, (1881-83), and the unexecuted plans for Barrow Point, Pinner (1879), where a number of features present at Dunley Hill were adumbrated. Dunley Hill shares with Fremington House¹¹, near Barnstaple, by Ernest Newton (1882), the spirit of Queen Anne, engendered by asymmetry and a genial mixture of motifs from different periods.

The site chosen for Dunley Hill was nearly in the centre of the estate, the approach was to be from the road, by a wide carriage drive, bordered on either side by spacious lawns and flower beds opening into the courtyard in front of the house. The plan was an uneven E with picturesque variations, formed by two wings from the courtyard, in the middle of which was a tall porch. The garden facade was interrupted by the slight projection of drawing and dining rooms. A weather slated observatory or lookout tower, on the west front, faintly reminiscent of that at Woolpits (1885-88), with a bell cupola and first floor balcony, enlivens the composition. A note of picturesque formality is introduced in the brick decoration which extended to long pilaster strips, not only at the angles of the central gables, but also flanking and coming between the hall windows. These pilasters reoccur in the more formal design for Eastcote Lodge, Pinner (1888). At Dunley Hill, the mixture of motifs is relaxed and picturesque, much of

the brick decoration and carvings in the plaster gables of the verandah recalling work at Woodhouse and Westgate, of 1880-81.

Internally, the most important feature was the hall, some 33'x 18' rising through two storeys, open to the roof, and with a gallery running around three sides giving access to three bedrooms and dressing room. This was the arrangement intended for Barrow Point, Pinner (1879). The staircase was kept separate, at the back of the house, between the library, dining and smoking rooms.

The internal detailing was picturesque. Three long windows in the hall had leaded lights and stained glass panels, protected by ornamental wrought iron railings and iron bound shutters. The large fireplace had a carved stone chimney-piece with loose grate surmounted by massive overmantel, itself supported by male and female figures. French casement windows from the anteroom opened onto the verandah. The morning room had a large square bay window 7' deep fitted with recessed seat, handsome fireplace with loose grate and overmantel, and French casement windows to the conservatory. The drawing room similarly equipped also opened onto the verandah. Above, the master bedroom had fitted wardrobes, and elliptical ceilings were prescribed for the west bedrooms, which had either window seats or doors onto the balcony.

The house apparently sported

'all the modern improvements of Heating apparatus, Electric Bells, Sanitary Arrangements, Ventilation and water supply to which special attention has been paid'. 12

All rooms were ventilated by patent inlet and outlet ventilators, and were provided with speaking tubes. The corridor, gallery bedrooms, halls and reception rooms, were all heated by a radiator system. Water was supplied from a deep well, and pumped to large storage tanks in the roof of the house. There were also large rainwater storage tanks both in the grounds and roofs.

It is interesting to note that although the internal planning of the house was to alter considerably from the plans of 1886, the basic shape of the house remained unaltered. The first set of plans show hall, staircase, billiard room, drawing and dining rooms, library and smoking room, with a spiral staircase enabling Maxse to retire from

the latter to his bedroom. The first floor plan showed an uneasy passage at the east end of the hall, with a minstrel gallery. The 1887 plans show that a morning room and conservatory have replaced the billiard room. While levelling the projections at the front of the house, this arrangement reduced the clarity of the west wing, with the addition of the conservatory. At first floor level, the minstrel gallery was replaced by a screen which neatened the passage from landing to WC over the porch. The spiral staircase was also replaced.

The most radical changes occurred in the service quarters, which were reduced considerably to form three sides of a yard. Gun room, brushing room and dairy were dispensed with, and at first floor level a corridor ran down the side of the range overlooking the courtyard, and a governess's room replaced the footman's room, indicating the presence of children. George and Peto also designed the coach house¹³ and a fives court. In March 1890, George and Peto drew up plans for extra bedrooms in the attic storey, suggesting that the reduction of servants' rooms in 1887¹⁴ had been imprudent. Minor alterations were also made to the morning room.¹⁵

Maxse was to occupy the house for only thirteen years, dying in 1900 of typhoid fever. Meredith wrote,

'The loss to me is past all count . . . Nobility was his characteristic and always where that is required in life, I shall have him present'.¹⁶

Dunley Hill is one of the most successful of all the attempts made by the Queen Anne School to adopt the style for country house design; being picturesque and genial in its employment of the attractive features of the style.

The house is reasonably well preserved considering its chequered career since 1900, having been an Officers' Mess for the Americans, and a location for the Atherton family to build aircraft components. It is now occupied by an engineering company who have modified the ground floor to accommodate offices and heavy machinery.

Redroofs, Streatham Common, London (1887-88)

Ernest's father, John George died on 29 March 1886 at his home at 4 Manor Park Terrace, Streatham where he had lived since the 1860s. His wholesale ironmongers business had prospered, having moved to 18 Gt Alie Street, Whitechapel in 1882. At the time of his death the firm, a co-partnership between John, Frederick Beardsworth and Arthur Wilbraham¹⁷, was sufficiently successful for John George to leave a personal estate of £17,899. It is of some interest that John George left his leasehold premises 7 Grecian Cottages, Beulah Hill, Lower Norwood to his sisters;¹⁸ Ernest George was the freeholder of 1 Grecian Cottages. He had lived at number 1 since 1866-67.¹⁹

A widower since 1875, Ernest George decided, late in 1887, after his father's death in 1886, to design himself a house on nearby Streatham Common.²⁰ Having lived locally for some twenty years, George was in a position to recognise a propitious site. The house, with its acre of land, was to be the second on the west side of Ryecroft Road, going south from Crown Lane. In 1891, The British Architect reported that, 'the only houses in view are two or three similar ones to the left and others which belong to Streatham some half a mile away'²¹. Despite Streatham being, 'undoubtedly well within the pale of Greater London',²² according to accounts of 1902, 'a stranger looking from the window of Mr Ernest George's house, would never for a moment guess he was within seven miles of the metropolis'.²³

The site was only an acre, but studiously arranged so as to look larger in extent, with its view across the garden with

'its clipped yews and sloping lawns which drop down towards hedges and low trees, then without any perceptible break one looks over the gorse and bracken of Streatham Common continuing towards a fine group of elms. Beyond this there is nothing to be seen but more distant foliage backed by the blue horizon formed by Banstead and Epsom Downs'.²⁴

On entering the courtyard, the house, facing north-east presented itself. Redroofs was simple, but beautifully judged; in plain red brick, and with brick copings. Two projecting gables on the entrance facade were quietly curved, and surmounted by small, lightly angled pediments. The handling and details owe something to George Devey's work at Denne Hill, near Canterbury (1871-75), and on the Spencer Estate near Southampton (c.1876).²⁵ George employed similar curved

and pedimental gables subsequently at Poles, Hertfordshire (1890-92) and at Busbridge Hall, Godalming, Surrey (1906).

The third recessed gable on the entrance facade at Redroofs was plain, as were those on the south-west garden side. The south facing facade showed one of George's favourite arrangements of a tall chimney rising through a gable, to create a picturesque asymmetry. (Pl.240)

The original plans of 1887, (which, at George's request, were never published), differ from the house as built, drawn by Raffles Davison in The British Architect in 1891, which in turn differs from the R A drawing published in 1888, (Pl.241) although the disposition of the reception rooms clearly remained the same. The plan was remarkably simple. The internal porch led into the hall, from within which the stairs rose in two adjacent flights, elegantly screened with carved oak. Behind the hall, the dining room with its south-west facing bay, two-thirds window, looked out across the gardens. (Pl.242) To the left the studio, which rose the full height of the house, had one small window looking on to the courtyard, four magnificent long windows facing south-east, while two more faced south-west. A conservatory was to have been placed at the eastern corner but labelled 'probably omitted' on the 1887 plan. To the right of the front door lay the service quarters. The house had six bedrooms, a dressing room and a library upstairs.

(Pl.240)

A comparison of George's R A drawing and Raffles Davison's sketch, reveals that alterations were made to the north-east front of the service block. These alterations were to accommodate the addition of a detached five-sided court with an open timber roof, for winter exercise (perhaps inspired by that built for Admiral Maxse two years previously). George ran a corridor from the erstwhile porch window to the north, with a row of twelve leaded lights leading to the court, thus creating a second rectangular courtyard, probably involving no change from the original plan, other than to raise the north facing window, possibly to admit more light.

Although restrained, the decorative details were of a characteristically high quality. The entrance doorway, (Pl.243) constructed from oak, had an old wrought iron handle, brought from Paris, while on the second of the front windows there was a quaintly carved stone lion, arranged as the terminal to the string course which ran from over the doorhead.

There were seven of these little lions about the house, all brought over from Belgium and each one varying slightly in design. Four of them perched at the ends of the terrace wall on the garden front. At the angle of the studio on the garden front, a carved figure of the Virgin and Child, which George had perhaps brought from abroad, was attached to the wall at the level of the heads of the tall studio windows, over it was arranged a copper hood creating an unusual feature. In the gable flanking the chimneys, to the right, was a principal plaster panel with a sundial, which must have given an agreeable accent of colour. Another external feature was the open garden porch, just beyond the square bay of the dining room, formed in the angle of the gable. Down in the grounds, flanking the tennis lawns, were a small oaken summer house and a large pigeon cote. There was also a rose garden in the terrace, and it seems probable that its formal lines, of stone flagged paths radiating from the centre, and its old Venetian well head, witness the hand of Harold Peto.^(Pl.244)

Internally, the decoration would appear to have been kept subservient to the superb collection of Renaissance furniture, pictures and tapestries, many of the items having been collected in travels abroad. As Raffles Davison commented,

'No firm of English architects has perhaps enjoyed more the pleasures of luxurious furnishing and appointments to their designs than Messrs George and Peto. But it is not by reason of high finish and elaboration that Redroofs attracts one; it is rather by qualities almost the opposite, and which come more within the reach of ordinary mortals'. 26

The entrance door opened into a small porch, lined with brick, with a wood ceiling. To the right was a round arched opening to the side corridor²⁷ leading to the fives court, the passage was brick lined and furnished with old chests, and a long range of leaded windows. The squarish hall was oak panelled from floor to ceiling with an oak floor.^(Pl.243) George blended old and new harmoniously, various early examples of carving being incorporated as they were to be in The Yellow House (1892) for Percy Macquoid. The framed enclosures to the two staircase flights were also of oak, with open carved panels and the staircase with its carved posts and solid moulded steps was kept uncarpeted. A wide open doorway led to the first flight of stairs on the left, and into the service corridor on the right which serviced

the dining room, so that service from the kitchen was not through the hall. On the left side of the hall was a plain arched fireplace with a seat next to it, creating an impromptu inglenook. 'The furnishing of beautiful old chest, chairs, pedestals, tables, lamps and pictures produce a picture of quaint and picturesque loveliness', wrote Davison of the hall, 'which is about as strong a contrast as one could imagine to the ways of the modern Briton and his upholsterers', 28
The King remarked,

'When one passes from the entrance hall into the drawing-room one sees nothing to suggest that the house did not exist before 1888, and without close examination there would be every excuse for giving the date as 1588' 29
 (Pl.245)

The drawing room, or 'studio' as George called it on the plan, was undoubtedly the finest room in the house, a long lofty room, some 45' x 17', with substantial ceiling timbers and wood filling between them. The walls had a high oak dado with rich leather wall covering above, hung at intervals with tapestries. A stone fireplace projection (Pl.246) with rounded corners went right up to the ceiling, which was ornamented in the centre of the lintel with a clever grotesque of three faces. The restraint shown in the design of all the fireplaces in the house is worth noting in comparison with George and Peto's work in the early 1880s. The hearth of the studio was composed of narrow bricks, and there were fire dogs and a suspended chain for the tea kettle above the wood fire. The six mullioned and transomed windows came down to within a foot of the polished oak floor and had shutters and leaded light glazing, with circular medallions, a delicate touch used in the hall windows at Dunley Hill (1876-78).

A feature unique in George's work was the division of the room by a light oak transverse-arched beam, allowing the room to be curtained off into two sections in the contemporary arrangement of morning and drawing rooms. It seems unlikely that this would ever be desired, but the slightly arched screen was surmounted by old carved figures and metal work, providing an opportunity for furnishing and display at an unusual but effective level. While quite domestic in character, the dimensions of the drawing room and the fact that George alludes to it as 'the studio' on his plan of 1887, perhaps indicate that he saw the room in the spirit of the furnished, semi-domestic and status-

conscious studios for entertaining that were designed for artists in the preceding decades in Holland Park and Chelsea.

The dominant position of the studio could be read externally in true Puginian spirit. On the entrance front the string course changed level and a sectional drawing³⁰ reveals that the three bedrooms and dressing rooms above the studio would be lower in height than the other bedrooms and library, which was on the first floor. The dining room was furnished with oak chests by way of seats, and the fireplace (Pl.246) was built up entirely of red brick; hearth, hob, back and all. It was enclosed by a perfectly plain, broad green marble architrave, above which rested an oak overmantel. The door recess, created by the staircase, was a good feature in the room, the door being bordered, inside and out, by old carving of a high quality. A hanging lamp, designed by George to raise or lower over the dining table, was also introduced at Shiplake Court in 1889.

There were two landings upstairs, (Pl.244) and George, rather curiously, placed his own bedroom with ensuite bathroom and W C over the kitchen, facing north-west. These rooms could be approached from the service corridor, or by a separate staircase. Photographs and sketches³¹, reveal that George's bedroom, and the guest room, had curved ceilings like those at Dunley Hill and 52 Cadogan Square. The bedroom had a plain, light coloured tiled fireplace and housed a fine old Jacobean four-poster bed. (Pl.247) The guest room faced east/north-east and was unusual in that it was divided by a partition rendering one half of the room a sitting room and the other a bedroom. Quite a good deal of space was taken up by large carved doors created out of four tall pieces of intricate carving which George brought from Japan, these, when closed, formed the partition. The library, described by The King as a 'schoolroom'³², was really more like a small morning room. It housed a plain, arched brick fireplace with plain carved surround, the lintel being surmounted by an intricate piece of carving, with small painted panel above.

Collecting was a shared interest of George and Peto. The former wrote from Algiers in 1889, 'So we have thirteen years of work and play together? I wonder how much more work there is in either of us, or both collecting'.³³ George's interests were evidenced in the studio which contained a table brought back from a visit to Spain, and in the dining room, where there was a fine old oak table,

embossed leather chair, old pictures and table glass. A Hispano-Moresque cabinet, with wrought steel hinges and locks stood on a small Spanish table in the hall, at the foot of the staircase.

Darcy Braddell, recalled,

'Ernest George's office in my time, still kept up a tradition of many years' standing of being actively interested patrons of the antique dealers. It was no uncommon thing for a dealer to arrive with perhaps a Persian rug or two, a dozen or so Delft plates, a pair of famille-rose vases which he would try to unload first on Ernest George himself, and then, if unsuccessful in that quarter, on the 'young gentlemen' in the drawing office. . . George had the most beautiful possessions imaginable and it was a liberal education to a young man who had seen next to nothing of really beautiful things to be asked to dinner at his house. When I first went to his office he was living in one he had built for himself on Streatham Common. It was there that a new curate once called and celebrated his visit by treading on a Persian rug which shot from under his feet, landing him on the back of his head with one foot through the panel of a Coromondel screen, which then fell over and shattered a fine Kang-hi vase'. 34

George lived at Redroofs until 1903 and, according to Yeates, often rode to work. He moved to 36 Lancaster Gate, selling his Streatham home to Edmund Frederick Taperell. Braddell recalls,

'I remember very well the lovely farewell party that Ernest George gave at the house before he left Streatham to live in Lancaster Gate, and I can still remember my horror at his giving up living in so delightful a place of his own making, even if the neighbourhood had been completely suburbanised, for life in what I considered, when I first saw it, a commonplace Victorian barrack fit only for a rich City merchant. I changed my opinion, though on the night I dined there and saw what George had done with its interior and how impressive and desirable his belongings looked in it'. 35

Redroofs lamentably destroyed post 1912, was well judged, reticent and dignified; its restraint is of significance. In view of George's earlier houses it would be tempting to assume that he deliberately contrived to design a simple setting for his collection of elaborate works of art, and Redroofs certainly holds a seminal place in George's work; exemplifying as it does, his own choice of domestic architecture and interior design. However, the house can also be located within George and Peto's move away from picturesque detail,

towards greater simplicity and formality in the late 1880s, as outlined in Chapter 4. This shift in emphasis is particularly apparent in the contemporary design for Batsford Park, Gloucestershire (1888-90).

Redroofs was not the last house that George was to build on Streatham Common, Ryecroft,³⁶ (Pl.248) a gabled, half-timbered and tile-hung exercise, was built on the plot next to Redroofs for Douglas Cow, briefly a suspect in the Jack the Ripper case, and one of the Streatham family.

Batsford Park, Gloucestershire (1888-93)

'"From Batsford Park to Asthall Manor to Swinbrook House to Old Mill Cottage" was our slogan to describe the decline in family fortunes from Grandfather's day'. 37

Thus wrote Jessica Mitford in the first part of her autobiography, Hons and Rebels .

In 1886, Algernon Betram Freeman-Mitford, writer, traveller and retired diplomat who had been working as secretary in the Office of Works since 1874, inherited the properties belonging to his cousin, the Rt. Hon. John Thomas Freeman-Mitford, Earl of Redesdale (1805-86), who had died without issue, rendering the titles extinct. The inheritance included Batsford Park Estate, Gloucestershire.

Freeman-Mitford promptly resigned his post, recalling in his memoirs,

'I was now a free man and after a trip of a month in France I sold my London house, took possession of Batsford and made up my mind to become a country squire', 38

he continued,

'The next few years were peaceful and uneventful. I was occupied with all those interests which made a country gentleman's life so full of interest, We seldom went to London and then only for a few days at a time'. 39

In the following years, Freeman-Mitford entrusted the design of Redesdale Hall, Moreton-in-Marsh (1887), and Batsford Park (1888-90) to George and Peto. Both works were built by Peto Brothers, a point of some significance, since the firm rarely built outside London and then, it would seem, only for family and friends. Freeman-Mitford is likely to have known the Peto s through public, Parliamentary circles and the Office of Works. Furthermore, Harold Peto and Freeman-Mitford shared a mutual interest in gardening. Both knew Sir Willaim Middleton,⁴⁰

'a great character',⁴¹

recalled Freeman-Mitford,

'famous for his gardens, in days when gardening was less the fashion than it is now, and for his wigs, innocent frauds which deceived no-one, except, perhaps himself. He had a wig for every day of the month, graduating in length'. 42

Freeman-Mitford was the author of 'The Bamboo Garden' a history of the famous grass and a celebration of its value in the English garden. He also collected rare trees. In 1898, Harold Peto wrote in his diary of his journey to Kandy,

'To my surprise and delight, Mitford with David and Iris arrived today, at my delightful 'House in the Wood' here, he had come to pay a visit to David who has been out in Ceylon for a year teaplanting; M. said to me on arriving, "with all my wanderings I have never seen anything to touch this, except perhaps, the island of Penang near Singapore", he said he was, "fairly upside down with astonishment at the luxuriance". I went with him to the Perodenga Gardens directly he arrived as I knew it would be a treat for me to go round with him, it was late, so we devoted the remaining daylight to the bamboos, which of course interest him specially, those in this garden are acknowledged to be the largest in the world, huge geysers of them sprouting upwards to 135' high by the river bank, the stems about 10 inches through'. 43

Redesdale Hall, Moreton-in-Marsh ^(Pls 249 & 250) erected by Freeman-Mitford in memory of his kinsman, the late Earl Redesdale was opened in December 1887, by the Rt Hon. Sir Michael E. Hicks-Beach, Bart, MP. Occupying a prestigious position in the principal street and market place, the hall was

'intended for the free use of ths inhabitants irrespective of creed or politics, provided only that it be not disgraced by words of treason or blasphemy'. 44

In their employment of a pure, chaste Tudor style, perfectly judged to acknowledge Cotswold vernacular elements, George and Peto adumbrated the mood of Batsford Park, begun the following year.

Built from locally quarried Cotswold stone, low, flattened arches formed an open arcade at ground floor level, suggestive of a market, but intended here as a shelter. The tower, carrying a handsome clock, whose dial illuminated at night, provides a quiet but hieratic note, lending dignity to the whole.

Internally, the upper part of the building contained a large hall with seating capacity for four hundred. The walls were panelled, with an oak floor and stone chimney piece franked by windows depicting the arms of Lady Clementina Mitford and of Freeman-Mitford himself. At the north end was a raised dais.

Curiously, Freeman-Mitford makes no reference to the architects of Redesdale Hall and Batsford Park, in his copious, exhaustive Memories, in which no opportunity of dropping a name was lost. The present Lord Redesdale suggests,

'I know it cost far more than he anticipated and he may not have mentioned it, it was a great extravagance especially the stables'. 45

Daphne Denham ⁴⁶ recalls,

'My twin brother and I were born at Batsford and to me it is the most beautiful place on earth, but I never remember my parents even mentioning the name of the architect.' 47

But for the landed class, employing a leading architect to design country houses was a matter of course unless an ostentatious splash was required.

The present house ⁴⁸ was built to replace an earlier dwelling described as 'incommodious and out of harmony with the noble park in which it stands' ⁴⁹. There is a watercolour at Batsford by Guy Dawber showing the earlier house, which was of classical character, and on a site a little above the present one, and to the east.

Batsford Park represents an important change in George's country house work in regard to both plan and treatment. The earlier country houses had all been picturesque in composition, with more or less free plans, Rousdon being the exception. Principal rooms had been grouped loosely around the hall at Buchan Hill (1882-86), Stoodleigh Court (1883), Woolpits (1885-88), Glencot (1885-87) and Dunley Hill (1887-88).

At Batsford, George and Peto chose an H or E shaped Elizabethan plan, in place of their usual double pile, and enforced it with considerable regularity. (Pl. 251 & 252)

Despite the Late Georgian revival of the Elizabethan style there was little indication of an accompanying revival of the E and H plan. Loudon had adapted such a plan for his Beau Ideal villa, based on Hatfield. There was only one such contemporary example in Salvin's Jacobean Harlaxton Manor begun in 1832 ⁵⁰. Blore was asked to consult, but Burn took over in 1838, building the service wing which had to be 'in strict conformity', with Salvin's work, as well as the conservatories and the Baroque kitchen garden. The plan showed an

extraordinary collection of elements, the basements and piano nobile of a Palladian House, the entrance range forms a symmetrical E, but backs onto a range containing a mediaevally planned Great Hall plus asymmetric wing.

As Jill Franklin points out ⁵¹ after Harlaxton, the E or H plans were largely ignored for over half a century, presumably on account of their unfashionable symmetry. The nearest that architects came to an Elizabethan or Jacobean plan was in some of the double pile houses where advancing bays (often on one elevation only), gave a mild resemblance to an H or E. Clutton's Hatherop House, Gloucestershire (1871), or Brandon's Hemstead House, Kent (1859-62), were typical examples.

It was only in the 1880s, when the return to more formal symmetry began, that the H or E plan began to look more Elizabethan. In 1884-91, Thomas Garner, partner of Bodley, designed the immense Hewell Grange, Worcestershire for the Earl of Plymouth. The house was an H-shaped symmetrical main block of three ranges, the entire central one being taken up by the two storey hall, which took up a greater proportion of the house. Porch and vestibule, with chapel over, were on the same axis as the garden vestibule in the centre of the symmetrical garden side, and these crossing axes divided the ground floor into separate zones, male rooms, reception rooms, private rooms, and at the end, the state dining room. The last zone on the entrance front held the main staircase.

It is into this context that Batsford must be placed. It was the first example of George's adopting the H or E plan which he was to use again at Shiplake, Oxfordshire (1889-91), and Motcombe, Dorset (1893-94), and invariably in houses designed with Yeates.

George and Peto's designs to date, had often been based on a double pile scheme of two unbroken ranges with central, spinal corridor upstairs. At Dunley Hill (1887-88) however, the plan showed George and Peto's awakening interest in formality. A double pile, it did, however, form a vague E on the entrance front, despite the asymmetry of the garden front. At Batsford the H was rigorously enforced, serving to contribute to the sense of balance, discipline and dignity which is the keynote of the house.

The principal reception rooms range along the south front. The library occupies the centre of the symmetric garden side and this, together with the dining room, drawing room, ballroom and smoking room all open irregularly out of the hall, the latter occupying two storeys, and housing the staircase with stone arched gallery. The ballroom occupies one wing of the north courtyard, and is a lofty, oak roofed hall, again of two storeys. For symmetry's sake, the butler's suite was put in the fourth leg of the H, making the pantry a traffic route to the men's stairs and to two other rooms.

The unusual feature of this arrangement is that the main entertaining room was not the panelled and galleried great hall, but the ballroom^(Pl.253) which was remarkable in a number of ways. In the first instance, it was designed to serve also as a tenants' hall, having a separate porch attached, 'for convenience when entertaining tenants and others'.⁵² At the north-west corner George arranged a tall collegiate bay window, similar to that at Stoodleigh Court (1883). Next to the window, an inglenook, rather incongruous in a ballroom, but aiming perhaps, as at Rousdon (1874-83) and Buchan Hill (1882-83), to provide a touch of intimacy. The separating of the functions of the great hall and ballroom is a development which will be examined later in this chapter.

Another unusual feature of the house was the positioning of the smoking room, which opened directly from the hall, and even had a door communicating with the ballroom. The Builder, sensitive to the opinions of Prince Albert's generation, commented,

'the smoking-room door opening direct on the central hall would convey the smell of smoke over a great part of the house, (if any inmates happen to object to that)'.⁵³

Freeman-Mitford might well have favoured this plan, encouraging the relaxation of social habits. He recalled,

'There can be few matters in which custom, or fashion, has veered round more completely than it has done in the matter of tobacco during my lifetime. The F.O. was when I entered it the only public department in which smoking was allowed'.⁵⁴

Freeman-Mitford quotes Harley L'Estrange, featured in Bulwer's My Novel, published in 1852, who lamented,

'In country houses we were badly off indeed. When the ladies left the drawing room, the men who wished to

smoke were sent down to the kitchen or the servants' hall to fight rival perfumes of beer, tepid beef, cheese and onions' 55 .

Perhaps remembering his own experiences, Freeman-Mitford would have encouraged relaxation,

'The banishment of cigars from the statelier rooms once led to my turning a chance acquaintance into something like a friendship. Sir William Middleton, a grand gentleman of the old school, gave a party at his beautiful place, Shrubland in Suffolk, in honour of the Duke and Duchess d'Aumale. The gardens were exquisitely beautiful, the house, comfort itself, the cook an artist of highrepute, but there was no smoking room. The Duke was a confirmed smoker, and, strange to say, I alone in all that large party was able to keep him company. We were sent off - not to the kitchen, for in his case it would never have done - but to some remote turret, whence it was hoped that no noxious fumes might penetrate the rest of the house and there we sat and smoked till the small hours. 56

There were a number of disadvantages accompanying the H plan. Sir Edmund Beckett pointed to one of the reasons for its possible lack of popularity. The advancing wings of an H plan, he said, had 'nearly every possible fault'.⁵⁷ The chief objection was the necessity for the wings always to communicate through the centre of the house,

'a friend of mine . . . cannot get a cup of tea or a pail of slops out of the rooms in one of his new wings . . . without carrying it through the principal hall' 58 .

George and Peto, clearly aware of this disadvantage, furnished the hall not only with a garden entrance, so that tenants could approach it from outside without having to come through the house, but also with a buttery, 'for the convenience in entertaining tenants and others'.⁵⁹

The buttery was an absolute necessity, in view of the distance between the ballroom and kitchen, and to facilitate service an underground tunnel, fitted with tramlines and a trolley, connecting hall with service wing. The other attendant drawback was one which was to bedevil George, Peto and Yeates as their plans became increasingly formal and symmetrical. Their adherence to the rigidity of the formal block invariably rendered rooms long and thin. The ground floor rooms were always arranged rationally, but the lines of communication were

often a problem and this was instanced at Batsford, where the H plan required runs of passage to two outlying bedrooms in the wings. A further problem was the inadequate lighting of the service corridor.

The great hall was at the centre of traffic routes, and housed the grand staircase^(Pl.254). The approach to the upper rooms was formed behind arcaded walls, which made 'an interesting feature'⁶⁰, the arches having pierced stone parapets, and the oak staircase with its carved and pierced strapwork ornament beneath the handrail. The hall had a characteristic stone fireplace from floor to ceiling. From the hall, to the south, leads a tunnel vault to the garden entrance and to the west, a similarly vaulted passage lit by a window. The Builder commented on

'the offices corridor, running in one straight vista from a door in the centre of the hall wall down to another door in the yard, cannot be said to be a desirable arrangement for that separation between the two sections of a dwelling which is generally preferred in this country'.⁶¹

If the plan of Batsford reflects a new formality in the work of George and Peto, then the exterior too, echoes the new sobriety and reticence evident in some of their other domestic designs of the late 1880s, discussed in the previous character.

The general character of the house is that of a Tudor manor house, which has been described variously as 'Cotswold-Elizabethan'⁶² and a 'clever working up of the Dorset Tudor-Gothic style'⁶³. Built of Boughton stone, quarried on the estate, the house had walls three feet thick and in character shares the reticent simplicity of Redesdale Hall, but being on a larger scale, perhaps forfeits some of the charm of the market hall.

At first sight Batsford looks disarmingly like a genuine Elizabethan manor house^(Pl.255). Its style was based less upon the very grand sixteenth century houses, soon to be published by J.A.Gotch in The Architecture of the Renaissance in England (1891-94), than on the more modest contemporaries, Chastleton rather than Longleat. Batsford is larger than its Tudor exemplars and the sense of massiveness is underlined by the prominent string courses with their emphatic note of horizontality. These long, level lines of string course were used by George and Peto, contemporaneously at Redroofs (1887-88), and Pollock's house at Bagshot (1888),⁶⁴ the only difference being that at Batsford the

small windows are segmental-headed but, as in other instances they rest on the strings. The Builder remarked,

'these small windows are charming in architectural effect, but suggest the idea of a little deficiency of light in some rooms; however, there is no doubt many modern houses err in the way of repose, so perhaps a protest in the other direction is desirable'. 65

The house had an air of austerity, especially to the north,^(Pl.256) where the gable walls were left almost completely windowless and blank, which perhaps gave rise to its being compared with a convent by The Building News⁶⁶. Indeed, the principal elevations are broadly regular, mouldings are confined to the openings, copings and string courses and are of a very simple design. The semi-circular window on the ground floor of the west front is of a particular simplicity.^(Pl.257) It is of significance that the opportunity for picturesque elaboration of parapets and chimneys which George's Tudor precedents offered was studiously, almost wilfully ignored. The garden front was well provided with a series of close set bays, typical of those used by George and Peto at Buchan Hill and Woolpits.^(Pl.258) These banks of mullioned windows render the south front of Batsford a simplified version of Montacute, down to the garden pavilions, although George employed straight, rather than curved gables.^(Pl.259)

However, the overriding impression at Batsford, is that George appears to have been reacting against the picturesque massing and elaboration of details which had characterised so much of his earlier work. This shift can be seen within the wider context of a contemporary move towards classicism, particularly evident in the work of Shaw. The Architect summed up George's intention at Batsford as being,

'to treat the symmetrical Tudor house in a broad and dignified way, after the manner of an old building of the period, avoiding prettiness and fanciful features'. 67

The design relied for its effect upon proportion, massing and very spare detail. As far as the proportions of the house are concerned, Batsford creates, from most points of view, an effect of horizontality and also, curiously, of considerable height. This is encouraged by the frequency and strength of the string courses which are banded closely together above the first floor windows. This effect is particularly

strong on the north and south elevations and to the west it is (Pl.260)
 mitigated by the vertical accents of the chimneys and the ballroom bay.
 The general impression is slightly oppressive, as if the size of the
 house, already large for its manor house character, were being
 emphasized.

This is not, however, a discordant effect, for a kind of massiveness
 is an authentic part of George's work. Unlike Shaw, who engendered
 movement and tension in his country house designs by the deployment of
 gables, chimneys and other parts, George's work betrays a taste for
 static massing, the weight and direction of the wings, bays and roofs
 in his designs do not challenge the rest, but complement the compositions.
 This static quality was to some extent overlaid, in his early country
 house designs, by the picturesque detail, but at Batsford it was laid
 bare. The plain masonry of the north gable walls, the simple mouldings
 of its openings and the heavy effect of the string courses, all focus
 attention on the material solidity of the house, on the quality of its
 masonry and workmanship.

The solidity of George's massing should not obscure the detailing
 and ornament. Outside, there is little carved detail, except the coat of
 arms over the porch, inside the note of austerity is maintained to some
 extent in the hall which has expanses of bare masonry, but there is also
 fine detailing and ornament as in all the rooms, panelling, stone
 carving, plaster ceilings and electric light pendants. The workmanship
 of the panelling, door furniture and other details reflect the
 influence of the nascent Arts and Crafts Movement, while the originality
 of the stonework details in the ballroom has led to their being
 described as 'verging on Art Nouveau'.⁶⁸

The austerity of Batsford perhaps owed something to George's
 sensitivity to the locality in which he was working. In style, Batsford
 perhaps owes only a little to the distinctive Cotswold vernacular
 except in the cottage-scaled porch on the west front, but the architecture
 and landscape of the Cotswolds is austere and George may have felt
 this. It certainly impressed his pupil, Guy Dawber, who was appointed
 Clerk of Works at the house in 1888.⁶⁹ Dawber thought Cotswold
 buildings 'quaint and picturesque',⁷⁰ only to find that close
 acquaintance led him to admire rather 'their quiet, refined and simple
 treatment'.⁷¹ It was Dawber, in fact, who led the revival of Cotswold
 architecture based on seventeenth century vernacular models in the

1890s and early 1900s and that revival which has been so influential in that area, can in a sense be traced back to Batsford. Indeed, in the late 1920s when Lord Redesdale's son⁷² required a less pretentious house, it was to Guy Dawber that he turned for the Neo-Georgian Swinbrooke House, Oxfordshire immortalised as 'Alconleigh' in the exuberant and irreverent, semi-autobiographical novels of Nancy Mitford.⁷³

Batsford not only set the tone for some of George's later country houses, Motcombe (1893-94), Eynsham (1903-06) and Putteridge Bury, but also influenced smaller houses of the late 1880s.

Shiplake Court, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (1889-91)

Shiplake Court was designed in 1889 for Robert Hitchins Camden Harrison (1837-1924), a partner, from 1861-1912, in the firm of London stockbrokers, Hitchins, Harrison and Co. Harrison's family fortunes followed a typically successful, Victorian middle class course. His grandfather, John Harrison (b.1748), the sixth son of a Leicestershire farmer, had gone to London and established himself as a building contractor, and prospered through the expansion of the capital, thus making the transition from yeoman farming stock to the middle class. Frederick Harrison (1799-1881), sixth son of John, became a stockbroker and established the firm of Hitchins, Harrison and Co. Harrison leased Sutton Place, the Tudor mansion near Guildford, and in 1875-76 employed Norman Shaw to restore the fabric of the house, and execute minor alterations. Harrison appears to have had a keen interest in art and architecture which he passed on to his sons, Frederic, the aesthete and Positivist philosopher, who wrote amongst other diverse pieces, a book lovingly describing the contents of Sutton Place, and Laurence, another partner in the firm of stockbrokers, for whom Shaw designed 68 Cadogan Square in 1877-78; and Robert, George and Peto's client who was keenly interested in architecture. Indeed, in reporting R.H.C.Harrison's death in 1924, The Reading Mercury said

'He was interested in antiques and would travel miles to see an ancient building'. 74

Robert was Charles Dilke's brother-in-law and Robert Hitchins, author of The Green Carnation, was another offshoot of the family.

The Harrisons' employment of Shaw showed that they were clearly abreast of architectural fashion, and doubtless George and Peto were engaged on the strength of their reputation. Shiplake Court, built presumably as tangible proof of Robert Harrison's substance as an established stockbroker, ⁷⁵ was begun in May 1889, and was nearing completion in November 1891, when it was visited by Edmund and Amy Hanbury, for whom George and Peto were then planing Poles, Ware, in Hertfordshire (1890-92), Hanbury recalls,

'Met Amy at 12.35. Left Paddington with Amy and George 1.40, arrived at Shiplake Court about 3. Had a good look at Shiplake Court, being built - getting roof on - lovely red bricks - Tea in the Clerk of Works office, arrived Paddington 7.00pm'. 76

There had been a Shiplake Court since 1558, owned by the Engerfield family ⁷⁷, who had been there since before 1200. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the court was owned by Henry Constantine Jennings, who, because of increasing debts, was forced to let it to various tenants from 1764-92, during which time it fell into disrepair. In 1802 Jennings managed to sell the estate to a property speculator, and in 1804 the old court was pulled down, the materials being sold for business purposes. From surviving illustrations ⁷⁸ it can be seen that the house was H shaped, and separated from the river by a terraced bank and not by the present overgrown bank of trees ⁷⁹. By 1818 the site of the house had sunk to being merely Shiplake Court Farm, which Harrison bought in 1888 ⁸⁰.

The farm buildings were moved across the road to their present site, and the builders, A. Bush and Sons, began work. By May 1889 the foundations of the new Shiplake Court had been laid to the designs of George and Peto. The site selected, between the vicarage and Shiplake House was described in 1852 in Gardiner's Directory of the County of Oxford as one of the finest in the south of England, ⁸¹ looking towards the Thames. George and Peto were anxious to capitalise on the position, despite the attendant problems of building on a slope.

The plan is entirely in accordance with George and Peto's increasing formality as displayed at Batsford (1888-90), although at Shiplake the entrance side was asymmetric. On the south, garden side, the great hall or saloon was placed centrally between two advancing wings; formed respectively, by the dining room and library, behind an elevation of Elizabethan symmetry. As was the case in many Elizabethan houses, however, the central bay at Shiplake was not in the centre of the hall. The result is an irregular, three-legged H, with the central block to the north east. The choice of plan might, in addition to a general move towards formality, have owed something to the history of the site, of which George and Peto would have been conscious.

(Pl.261)

The style selected was Tudor, and perhaps as with the plan, George and Peto were mindful of its predecessor, and of Sutton Place. The whole was constructed from red Bracknell bricks, with black headers to form diapers, while the dressings and tracery are of Bathstone,

which was apparently stained to bring it to a tint more harmonious with the bricks. The roof was constructed of large slabs of Forest of Dean stone. In diapering, George and Peto were conforming to the Thames Valley Gothic tradition, also adhered to at G.Somers Clarke's Wyfold Court (1872-76) Oxfordshire, built for Edward Herman MP, the wealthy cotton manufacturer and art collector; and at P.C.Hardwick's Aldermaston Court (1848-51), Berkshire for Higford Burr MP which was,

'a large and ambitious building of brick with stone dressings in an overelaboration of the Puginian manner with much diapering and restless, chopping up of roofs'. 82

Peter Ferriday described Shiplake Court as 'one of George's most pleasant productions'⁸³, perhaps too mild an epithet for so vigorous a design. The external handling is confident and assured, particularly the south elevation,^(Pl.263) with its debt to English Renaissance, and its central bay window with arched, cusped lights the full height of the block. On either side were two projecting gable wings, and in each angle between these and the hall, George and Peto introduced Italianate loggias, allowing choice of shelter, with eastern or western aspect; a solution to be repeated at Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire by George and Yeates (1903-06). The balustraded terrace at Shiplake Court, carried out in flintwork and banded red brick, forms an important part of the design, linking the garden to the design of the south elevation.

^(Pl.264)
The north entrance front was planned asymmetrically, the service wing being placed at right angles to form the semblance of a courtyard. This arrangement not only rendered the south facade more crisp in its symmetry, but also alleviated, to some extent, the long straight corridor from the entrance hall to the service wing, which hampered the plan of Batsford. The entrance porch was emphasised by carrying up part of the building in a low, square tower with an octagonal turret, corbelled out from one angle. This forms the central point of the grouping of the north elevation.

The Builder, commented,

'The courtyard front is a curious and picturesque

mingling of cottage with castellated architecture, with a studiously irregular chimney breast (such as used to be a *bonne bouche* in 'Hardings Sketch Books') in one place; in another a single timber and plaster gable put in as if it were an afterthought. All this, if it is really an entirely new building, which is still open to doubt - is of course mere playing at antiquity, but it is very well done to adopt a criticism of President Lincoln's, 'For those who like that sort of thing, it is just the sort of thing they would like' ' 84 .

The west elevation, with its straight gabled bays grouped closely, recalls Glencot, Wells (1885-87) where George and Peto had also faced the complications of a sloping site.

Internally, the plan showed an interesting variation of grouping within the H of Batsford. One unusual feature lay in the fact that, because of the slope of the site, the garden range was several feet below the entrance. George, however, kept the steps down from the entrance hall and morning room into the great hall/saloon as inconspicuous as possible, and made no attempt to exploit the change of level, as might some of his contemporaries. The screens passage, used to separate the dining room and hall, however, was dangerously dark. Other attendant flaws of the H plan were revealed; upstairs in the awkward corridor access to the wings, on the ground floor, the right angled service corridor was poorly lit.

One of the most significant developments at both Batsford and Shiplake Court, was the separation of the entrance hall and great hall. In both instances the entrance hall housed the staircase, but was not intended to be a reception room for entertainment, this function was reserved for the great halls - at Batsford, in the form of the ballroom, and at Shiplake Court, in the form of the grand south-facing hall or saloon, entry into which was via the steps down, and through the screens passage, or steps down from the morning room.

Since by this date George and Peto were making rather a speciality of their great halls, this development prompts an examination of their handling of the great hall to date, within ✓ the wider context of its development and usage in the nineteenth century.

The whole issue of the revival of great halls had long since occupied the minds of architects, and as a result, of all the rooms

in the Victorian country house, the hall was subject to the greatest change. There had been a plethora of great halls before George and Peto's day. In the eighteenth century the hall had been the central focus for architectural display, conceived as a ceremonial introduction to the house, never as a living room. By about 1870 however, it had been developed and adapted as a favourite living room by a pattern of use, and could frequently dominate the entire planning of the house. There were three basic forms of hall available to the architect. Firstly, a one-storey sitting room, either entirely independent of the staircase (Worsely Hall, 1840-5, by Blore, or Hafodunos House, 1861-66 by George Gilbert Scott), or more usually, with the staircase rising from one side (Scotney Castle, 1837-43, by Salvin). Secondly, top-lit or galleried staircase halls which were the great set-pieces of houses, a form popular since the eighteenth century (Beaumanor Park, 1845, by William Railton). Thirdly, the hall could be of two or more storeys, but independent of the staircase. The latter allowed the greatest scope for change in form and the favourite novelty was to be the accurate revival of the medieval great hall. As Jill Franklin points out,

'In the early nineteenth century a Gothic hall, often called a baronial hall, embodied the same, romantic, imprecise vision of the middle ages as did Scott's novels. Any hall could be a great hall as long as it was large and high, with open timber or vaulted roof (the vaults of plaster if preferred) and had vaguely mediaeval detail. No one thought of reviving the mediaeval layout or setting the hall in its mediaeval position; the inspiration was more probably Fonthill Abbey.

But attitudes were changing and faithful reproductions became more desirable'. 85

The newly built great halls of the 1820s (for example Conishead Priory, begun 1821, and Penrhyn Castle, begun 1827), were built with no attention to traditional layout. The great hall at Newstead Abbey, however, was accurately restored as early as 1820 and Blore's Goodrich Court, an Edward I or II castle dating from 1828-31, was one of the earliest houses to respect historical correctness in the hall, 'Only the billiard table on the dais marred the historical illusion' 86 .

Other convincing variations on the real thing were Salvin's great halls at Harlaxton (begun 1828), and Bayons Manor (1836). As part of the remodelling at Scarisbrick (1837), Pugin, without altering the building lines, incorporated a two-storey great hall with the old house. Investing it with an independent roof with open timbers, and lantern and turning the entrance corridor into a screens passage, he declared proudly, 'I have builded it as in the days of old' ⁸⁷ . Ferrey's contemporary restoration of the great hall at Baynards Park (1838), while continuing the trend, lacked Pugin's conviction.

From the 1840s onwards a great hall became a popular feature, although it was not always designed as the hall of the house. 'It is as though the idea of the great hall came first and a modern function had to be found for it afterwards' ⁸⁸ . It was occasionally designed as the dining room, as at Blore's Great Moreton Hall (1841-43), but was more often reserved for special occasions, such as balls and banquets for the county, or entertainment for the tenantry ⁸⁹ .

Another new form of hall, appearing slightly later than the great hall, and chiefly in classical houses, was the central, top-glazed saloon with galleries at first floor level, giving access to the bedrooms. Possibly evolving from Late Georgian top-lit staircase halls, it could equally have found precedent in the Italian Renaissance cortile. Like the great halls, however, the top-lit halls, such as the saloon at Highclere, by Barry and Allom (1861), were not conducive as living areas.

'Yet within a few years, great halls and central saloons were both being put to new, more informal use. The process had begun early in the nineteenth century, when the billiard table was sometimes set up in the hall. At Lismore Castle this happened as early as 1812 and it may well have been earlier elsewhere. In the early 1830s Loudon's Encyclopedia only specified that the 'Entrance Hall must be large and handsome', but by the 1850s Scott notes that the entrance hall, 'is often the lounging place of the family or the playing room of the children'. It is also 'used as a gentleman's morning room', and 'if divided from the entrance vestibule by a screen, will become a delightful sitting room, particularly in summer'.' ⁹⁰

Mentmore Towers, by Paxton and Stokes, for Baron Mayer de Rothschild, begun 1850, was the first house to have a hall purposely designed as the main living room. Generally, the transition from hall

to sitting room evolved gradually, as comfortable furniture was introduced. Once the new role was accepted, however, the hall increased in size and importance, and, as the Gothic style gathered popularity, the hall increasingly took the form of a medieval great hall. As architects became increasingly conversant with the Gothic style and genuine great halls, they began to vary their plans. For example Keele had galleries at both ends; Kelham had a music hall with an upper gallery along its length, which acted as a bedroom corridor; the hall at St Audries had one long side pierced with arches like an aisle. Central saloons continued to be designed, but less frequently in a classical style.

Gradually, the distinction between medieval great hall and classical saloon blurred, their functions becoming confluent, although many looked unlikely as suitable sitting rooms, or inviting apartments. Kerr had given several reasons for not using the central saloon for such purposes; it lacked privacy (as it was normally a traffic route to several rooms), and this disadvantage was also connected with the staircase ⁹¹. The same objections could, of course, be levelled against the revived great hall, which Kerr does not mention in this connection. It was normally a traffic route and was beginning to include the staircase and have upper galleries, which doubled as bedroom corridors, none of which made for privacy. Yet, from the mid 1860s the hall was used increasingly as the main living room of the house, and people could be found sitting reading or talking there at any time of the day.

The virtue of the hall was that it was unsegregated, unspecialised, open plan, and was freely available at all times of the day, both to guests and family, to members of both sexes, children, and dogs. Architectural writers were soon proffering advice on how to plan such a hall. William Young recommended keeping it separate from the staircase, and free from servants' routes, so that it could be 'a large family room, quite private, and such as can be used on occasions for luncheon, or for a dance, or for a common sitting room'. ⁹² Stevenson also thought it might supply, 'the place of great reception rooms', and that its oak floor made it better than the drawing room for dancing and games, and remarked that it gave, 'any amount of scope for architectural magnificence'. ⁹³

During the 1870s Norman Shaw was to make something of a speciality of the great hall, probably prompted by his restoration work at Ightham Mote in 1870-72,⁹⁴ adumbrating the development, in an unexecuted plan, for a large house at Ilkley for F.W.Fison. This was followed by the extension of Upper House, Surrey in 1874, where Shaw designed the hall merely as a dining room, but with the full two-storeyed manorial treatment, open timbered roof, and outside buttresses. At Upper House, the hall was not the main living room as it had been at Willesley. As Andrew Saint points out, once Shaw returned to the great hall, he used it in one of three ways,

'as an entrance hall, with the screens passage principle safeguarded but the double-storey effect lost (Wispsers, Alderbrook, Burrows Cross), as a dining hall (Upper House, Merrist Wood, Adsdean) or as the great ceremonial hall reserved for great festivities (Pierrepont, Adcote, Greenham). After 1880 the two latter types seem abandoned in favour of the picture gallery halls of Dawpool and Craggside, but Shaw has his last and most glorious fling with the medieval hall at The Hallams'. 95

George, too, was to make a speciality of great halls, beginning with that of Rousdon. Like Burges's hall at Knightshayes, Rousdon was approximately medieval, 66' long x 26' wide, and of two storeys; it harboured a minstrel gallery, and the part below the gallery was screened off to form an ante room. An inglenook with oak settles, a hooded chimney piece reaching up to the roof, and manorial long window hopefully combined an architectural showpiece with an inviting cosy corner. At Buchan Hall George followed the plans of Ralph Nevill 's Old English at Snowdenham Lodge, by arranging the vast, two-storeyed hall in the centre of the house, a scheme later adopted by Romaine-Walker at Rhinefield Lodge, cross-traffic on the ground floor, and with an open arcade at first floor level, the arrangement perhaps militated against privacy and intimacy; the staircase, as at Rousdon, was kept separate. At Stoodleigh Court, however, the two-storeyed hall with collegiate conceits, had a two-storeyed bay with first floor windows between strong outside buttresses, and housed the staircase and a screened landing, to the west, which connected two lines of communication at first floor level. In all three cases the hall was invested with architectural splendour, while an attempt was made to create a focal point for activities and attention.

At Woolpits, the staircase and hall were combined into a one-storey space 41' long, at the corner of the main block, housing an inglenook with a more successful appeal as a 'cosy corner', and here there was no problem with traffic routes. Sedgwick Park had a two-storeyed hall in the centre of the house, with a gallery along its length, and a screened staircase; but at Glencot, a minstrel gallery was squeezed above the oak and walnut panelled one-storey hall-cum-staircase, clearly a purely decorative feature, generally associated with larger halls, although introduced by George and Peto at 52 Cadogan Square and 39 Harrington Gardens in more modest spaces.

As early as 1879, in the unexecuted Queen Anne design for Beechwood, Pinner, George and Peto rehearsed the plan of a two-storeyed hall with a gallery round the upper portion leading to the bedrooms, a plan which they were to adopt at Dunley Hill. At Dunley, the staircase was once again separate from the hall, the latter with its long Queen Anne windows, and centrally placed fireplace. The gallery at Dunley, running east/west on the south front, giving access to bedrooms.

Batsford marked an important development, in that the entrance hall and ballroom were completely separate. The former merely housing the staircase, leading to a landing, and gallery with stone arches giving access to the bedrooms, forming a rather larger, more elaborate version of the arrangement at Stoodleigh Court. The entrance hall, therefore, acted purely as an architectural introduction to the house. It was the ballroom that was remarkable in a number of ways, with its manorial trappings and incongruous inglenook, it doubled as tenants' hall, disproving Scott's Puginesque belief that when the medieval hall went out of fashion, there had been a decay of 'that ancient hospitality which is impossible without it, and which belongs especially to the great landlord'.⁹⁶

The drawing room was retained at Batsford, but at Shiplake Court, George and Peto produced yet another variation of plan. The great hall or saloon, some 60' x 24' was again separate from the entrance hall and staircase. Furthermore the effect of the two-storeyed hall was heightened by the access, either by stairs down from the front part of the house, or by the spiral staircase from the landing, or stairs up from the verandahs at either end. Despite the orthodox manorial

conceits and decorations, the south facing hall was clearly intended to be attractive as a living space, borne witness by the photograph dated 1891,⁹⁷ and by the fact that it replaces the drawing room, which was omitted from the plan.

The ambience of the hall at Shiplake Court,^(Pl.265) long, narrow and immensely high, was the subject of some discussion amongst commentators. It had a kingpost roof, with moulded purlins, stone walls and wind braces, with a bay window and immense fireplace opposite each other in the centre of the long side. The high panelled dado 'savouring exactly of fine oak work' and its stained glass in the screen, with mottoes, including 'Discreet example is the best sermon', did relieve the vast space to some extent, although there was no attempt to introduce an intimate inglenook as at Batsford. The hall housed an orthodox gallery at the east end⁹⁸. Originally planned for the west, this position was perhaps abandoned to allow for a small spiral staircase to service those apartments which were furthest away from the main stairs. The Builder was quick to comment upon the ambience of the hall,

'The whole is, to our taste somewhat too ostentatiously plain and solid to be in keeping with the taste and requirements of modern life: which is to say that were we to build a house with a big hall for our own use, we should prefer to give it a nineteenth century rather than a Medieval air, but tastes differ, and there are those who like a rather bare-looking open-timbered hall (against the latter element we have nothing to say) and an air of medievalism about their house, it is well there should be architects who can do the thing as well as this is done'.⁹⁹

In 1906 Shiplake Court was the subject of an article by L. March Phillips, who gave his approval to the 'later, flattened Gothic' adopted for the house. He asserted that the style, at once wordly and dignified, embodying the moderation and wisdom of the Renaissance citizen, was perfectly suited to domestic architecture (whatever its shortcomings might be for ecclesiastical buildings), and particularly for drawing and dining rooms, round which the social life of the house should revolve. Phillips notes that George had always shown a liking for Tudor with its comfortable English version of the Renaissance, and here it enabled him to design a central hall and its adjoining rooms imbued with an atmosphere of warmth and comfort

rather than the chill associated with Italian Renaissance architecture.

In singling out the hall for discussion, Phillips took up the issue of the appositeness of the medieval hall to modern life, raised by The Builder. George's adoption of an earlier style for the hall recalled, said Phillips,

'a quite different state of society and a different set of customs and fashions. Long and narrow, with a high-pitched pointed roof of black beams, plain stone walls, and stone-mullioned windows, it stands for that old feudal state of society, with all its fierceness, narrowness, and earnestness, which was, by and by, to expand into something more genial and humane'. 100

he continued,

'I daresay the reader has remarked that in modern reproductions of feudal architecture it is always the hall which perpetuates the feudal influence, the reason, no doubt being that it was the hall which most completely embodied that influence in the first place. Feudal life uttered itself fully in the feudal hall. The length and narrowness, admitting in the distribution of inmates of a certain distinction of classes, the lofty roof, where the woodsmoke and the reek of roast meats might mount and circulate, the high narrow windows, secure from assault, the huge chimney, where a cartload of logs would blaze at once - all these were features indissolubly bound up with the manners of their age, and very graphically representative of them'. 101

It quite naturally followed, argued Phillips, that those in England who looked with special appreciation on the arrangement of feudal society would find a particular satisfaction in imitating old Baronial halls. That dozens such halls should have arisen in the last decades of the English domestic revival, Phillips felt to be 'expressive of a naive regret for duties, responsibilities and privileges that have passed away'.¹⁰² But he contended, 'Architecture only lives when it fits life'.¹⁰³ While the chief recommendation of the 'flattened, later Gothic,' adopted by George for the remainder of the house could be endorsed, since

'Its spaciousness and sociability, its mixture of comfort and dignity are the very qualities needed in modern architecture, because they are the qualities which modern life at its best exhibits'. 104

Phillips further argued,

'the conditions of life implied in the feudal hall are past and done with. Regretted they may be, but they can never be recalled. Accordingly, if it be conceded that architecture should be the expression of what is best and most vital in life of its own age ... it is perhaps questionable if the revival of Gothic halls can be justified. They have a certain sentimental attraction, but they have no hold on present day life'. 105

An opinion shared by Muthesius, who contended Nesfield, Shaw and George had

'created faithful imitations of medieval halls, including even minstrels' galleries. Such rooms surely reflect a large measure of backward-looking romanticism and archaeological amateurism, which forms the most striking contrast to the other qualities of the modern English house'. 106

Since none of George and Peto's great halls (Rousdon, Stoodleigh Court, Batsford), retains its original furniture and appointments (many being given over to school halls or institutional reception rooms), it is all too easy to condemn them as cold and impersonal. Indeed, George and Peto's favourite choice of panelling surmounted by ashlar walls, and open timbered or beamed ceilings, would seem to endorse the view that comfort and convenience were sacrificed in the pursuit of archaeological correctness, in their revivals of medieval halls. However, contemporary photographs and descriptions point to the importance of decoration having been supplied by furniture, hanging tapestries, and other furnishings which engendered not only a romantic and nostalgic ambience, but also an area conducive to social activity. While George and Peto rarely cultivated the Old English repertoire of cosy nooks and bays, favoured by Shaw and other contemporaries, the halls at Buchan Hill, Woolpits and Dunley Hill could hardly be accused of being austere. At Batsford, George had been careful to retain the drawing room for 'comfort', while at Shiplake Court the entrance hall and great hall/saloon were separate, the latter assuming the function of the drawing room, a role it would appear, according to contemporary photographs, to have fulfilled admirably. (Pl.266)

An examination of George's subsequent handling of the great hall will reveal his ability to respond to its changing social, aesthetic and architectural identity.

A number of factors suggest that Harold Peto might have taken an active part in the design of the interiors at Shiplake Court. An Italian note is evident in the loggias and in some of the rooms. The morning room, for example, with painted raftered ceiling and crimson silk damasked walls, had a Venetian richness of colouring, 'not often met with in an English house',¹⁰⁷ while the dining room had panelling, floors and ceilings of mellowed oak, and the library,

'though tending to the Jacobean, and touched with the classic stiffness and formality, still keeps this early simplicity and sense of naturalness which mark the native style'. 108

George and Peto designed, in situ, the dining room sideboard and the Jacobean bed in Mrs Harrison's bedroom.^(Pl.267) Peto is reported to have designed the light fittings in the saloon¹⁰⁹ and to have prescribed the position of the furniture, returning periodically but unexpectedly to ensure adherence to his schemes.¹¹⁰

In November 1890, Barings, the financial firm in the city, failed, and Harrison was involved in considerable personal loss. This setback apparently prevented him from enjoying his intended lifestyle in the new house. Amenities and creature comforts, however, do not appear to have been sacrificed any more than decorative finishing touches.

Stables were built at some short distance from the house, and included a tower devoted to water storage and the housing of electric lighting plant - comprising boiler, engine, dynamo and accumulators. George and Peto were careful to contrast this with the designs of the house tower and adjacent church tower, by making the stable tower rather foreign in general outline, thus avoiding competition but creating a harmonious group. The entrance lodge was treated in a Jacobean spirit, red brick on the ground floor, surmounted with white roughcast and dark stained woodwork. The roof was constructed of stone slates from Bourton-on-the-Water, finer than those of the main house. Tiles might have created a greater contrast with the roughcast. A subordinate block, consisting of bailiff's house and dairy, were also designed. Here, the regular use of black diaper and dark stained wood window frames, create a somewhat dull effect.

In April 1891, on a visit to Shiplake, while Poles was being built, Robert Hanbury commented,

'Down to Shiplake by 1.30. Good look round the house.
Rooms too low, and everything sacrificed to the Hall.
Bricks not so good as ours - and picked out with white
grey leaders, too many, we like Poles better!' 111

Poles, Ware, Hertfordshire(1890-92)

On receiving the Royal Gold Medal from Professor Aitchinson, President of the RIBA in June 1896, George remarked to the general meeting:

'in house building, there is the very important factor of the client - he who pays for the house and is to live in it, and must in fairness be allowed his part in the scheming of it. If there are points in which his wishes differ widely from our own, a compromise is probably made; but we cannot record on our own building that this or that treatment was not in accord with our own judgment, but was a concession to the wishes of the owner. I suppose we have all known the distress of revising a scheme to its detriment, and having to do that which we knew to be second best.

How dull and monotonous our buildings would be if they were all turned out to our own fancy, and if there were no client with his distinct wants and wishes, to help in the shaping of them, imparting some individuality to each work. His wants should have the most careful consideration, even when at first they seem opposed to our views of what is best. He should have his voice in the arrangement and in the choice of style and treatment, but he should be wiser than to worry about his artist in the matters of purely architectural detail. I have spoken of the client in the masculine, but we find that women are among the most enterprising or intelligent of builders, and their judgment, sense of fitness, and refinement of taste are often most helpful to the Architect'. 112

The survival of the unpublished diaries and reminiscences of the clients, Edmund and Amy Hanbury provide an accurate chronology of the commission and render Poles one of the few works to provide insight into the relationship between architect and client.

Edmund Smith Hanbury (1850-1913) was a partner in the firm of Truman, Hanbury, Buxton and Co., Brewers of London and Burton on Trent. Edmund's great uncle Sampson Hanbury had been the first to enter the business in 1780, followed in 1814 by his brother, Edmund's grandfather, Robert (1796-1884), who became a partner in 1820. Sampson and Robert were sons of Osgood Hanbury of Holfield Grange, Essex, 'in which county the family had been established in the position of landed gentry for many generations'.¹¹³ Their sister Anna, had married Thomas Foxwell Buxton of Earls Colne, Essex, hence the entry of her brothers into the firm.

Edmund Smith Hanbury inherited the Poles estate in January 1884, on the death of his grandfather. Sampson Hanbury had been the original purchaser of the estate. A famous sportsman, thirty-five years Master of the Puckeridge Hounds, Sampson and his wife Agatha lived at Poles until Sampson's death in 1836, after which Agatha remained until her death in 1847 when she was succeeded by her brother-in-law, Edmunds grandfather, Robert.¹¹⁴

Edmund and Amy Hanbury lived at Bedwell, Hertfordshire and did not move into Poles until June 1885. The old house of Poles was 'a plain and rather unattractive building of grey painted brick'.¹¹⁵ It had pointed gables to the left and right of the entrance, and the fenestration was plain with sash windows. A conservatory featured prominently, testimony to Robert Hanbury's interest in horticulture. The interior was described by Amy after an Easter visit,

'The hall was not large, but comfortable, and the library opened out of it. In the grandfather's time it was furnished with the fine buhl bookcases (brass on rosewood) which had been made, I believe, specially for Mrs S Hanbury, and which afterwards we placed in the beautiful library of the new house. . .

One of the nicest rooms in the house was the large bedroom over the drawing room, with three windows one of which had a pretty view over the park . . .

In the grandfather's day the park was too shut in, with an ornamental garden, so that you hardly realised it; but Edmund and I took away the ornamentation near the house, throwing open the park, and thereby greatly improving and enlarging the place'.¹¹⁶

The Hanburys had moved to Poles in June 1885, from their house Bedwell, in Hertfordshire. They immediately set about, 'to make improvements'.¹¹⁷ as Amy Hanbury recalls,

'we were both young, and very fond of that kind of work, it was a great enjoyment to us. We soon began to plan the new and pretty entrance drive through the wood at Westmill, leading on the Walton Road. This was an immense improvement to the place, and opened out all that pretty side of Poles, which had never been done justice to. We built the lodge at the entrance, and erected the lovely iron gates, the design of which had been given to me by my dear friend, Mrs Giles-Puller of Youngsbury.

We then began planting a great deal and clearing away some of the ornamentation near the house. We also

did away with the conservatories on the Terrace and opened out the great oak at the end, and widened the terrace, making it a very delightful feature of the place'. 118

She further recalls that in 1888, 'after a good deal of thought on the subject', Edmund Hanbury resigned his partnership in the brewery. At that time they felt that the grounds and gardens of Poles were worthy of a better house and 'a more convenient one' 119 . They began turning over in their minds the question of rebuilding.

'The house (the old house) had been added to, and was not really well built so that alteration of this old house was impossible'. 120

They spent the spring in Princes Gardens 121, and in the summer visited Hamburg, where Edmund found the waters regenerative. On their return, 'much time was given to the plans for the new house'. 122

'Our architect was Mr (afterwards Sir Ernest) George, and we enjoyed working out together the plans for the Jacobean House we wished to build. The drawings and plans were most interesting, and we went into every detail, so as to do our best that the new house should improve, and yet be in harmony with, the old place and surroundings'. 123

The new house was begun on 1 March 1890 and finished on 1 February 1892, the builders were Messrs Simpson and Aynton, London and the cost was to be about £20,000 124 . The final account was £38,450s.2d. 125

It would seem that the Hanbury's first met Ernest George in February of 1889 126, when dining with Hallam Newnay, looking 'over Hallam's lively sketches of Holland and Italy', 127 Edmund Hanbury recalled,

'Ernest George eventually built our new Poles, we liked him very much. First rate artist and designer, much taste, perhaps not very practical'. 128

Hallam appears to have been a great friend and travelling companion of George. An undated letter from George to Harold Peto, from Algiers probably written in March 1889 129, addressed

'Dearest Partner, the Newnays are very nice. I wish Hallam could acquire the fine new complexion that I am sporting; he looks very thin and pale. Have you been to Malines or are you going? Yours always, E.G' 130 .

Hallam Newnay is an elusive figure about whom little can be firmly established. However, Stanley D. Adshead, an assistant in George's office for some months in 1889, writing in his memoir, Architects I Have Known, on the subject of Medland Taylor, the Manchester architect to whom Adshead was articled, commented,

'Medland Taylor was not without ability, but it was ability which expressed itself through the medium of another. This man was Hallam, known as the ghost. He had never been seen by anyone in the office, but it was understood that he was a draughtsman who had to wander from place to place for the sake of his health. Drawings were received by post following written instructions and, after being huddled into the private office by Coupe, were examined, rarely altered and passed into the drawing office, to be made workable by Cummings, before finally being traced by Rigby and myself, when ultimately our tracings got into the hands of the builder'. 131

The Hanburys appear to have taken an active interest in current art exhibitions ¹³², Amy Hanbury sketched, which perhaps accounts for their knowing Hallam Newnay. ¹³³

On 21 March 1889, a month after first meeting George, Hanbury notes,

'Went over 52, Cadogan Square ¹³⁴ with Amy and Peto. De la Rue's house, lovely hall, then to W. Cassells - very pretty. Then to Peto's - quite a gem ¹³⁵'.

On 29 March,

'down with Peto by 3.00pm with Amy to Redroofs. Mr George's house on Streatham Common ¹³⁶ - dull, gloomy, austere place. We did not like it'. ¹³⁷

George was on holiday during March, hence Peto's conducting the 'tours'. In a letter from Algiers, George refers specifically to the Hanburys,

'I hope the Hanburys liked the look of Redroofs and that they will be satisfactorily coming on. If they do you will perhaps get the house measured before I come back and then we will design the alterations in our first 15 minutes together'. ¹³⁸

The sequence of events throws some light on George and Peto's method of working. The planning appears to precede the composition. 10 April 1889, 'Gloomy and rain. Down by 11.00am with Amy and Peto to Poles, found it fine there. A useful day with Architect.' 14 May, 'Ernest George came, busy with plans', 17 May, 'George arrived

7.00pm', 31 May 'Met Amy at Maddox Street. George and Peto very patient, we settle to have the house straight and some offices at right angles, run for train by 4.55pm'. 13 June, 'Talk to George & Peto 2-4 about new plans - took some drawings of Spains Hall. H.Douvain came down with me'. Spains Hall in Essex is a late sixteenth century house of red brick with stone dressings, mullioned windows and curved gables. 25 June, 'Took Amy to George and Peto to tea. Left by 5.30', 18 July, 'Amy and I up by 9.23 long talk with Architects re. plans then to see Sir H.Peek (for whom George and Vaughan had designed Rousdon 1872-83)', 28 August 'explaining plans of new house to relatives in Scotland'. 16 September, 'Talk with E.George. Altering plans', 27 September, 'Met George in coffee room of GNR hotel, dined together, left by 8.00pm train, awfully hot - I went with George in 3rd class as far as Grantham but was very glad to exchange to Amy's comfortable carriage'. 15 October 'Met Amy at George's talk about plans - cutting down plans - home by 5.55pm'. 22 October, 'Quantity Surveyor Mr Redford came 10.30am. Went over house to settle what material etc. could be used in New Poles House'. The Architectural Association who were to visit the house in 1891 were 'amused to see some old deal skirtings re-used in the upper part of the house',¹³⁹ 31 October, 'Called on George and Peto', 4 November, 'Opened village club. Ernest George came, talk with him'. 13 November, 'our last dinner party at Poles (after the shoot) 15 November, 'long talk to George and Peto 10.30-12.40'.¹⁴⁰

It would seem that the plans had been quite fluid between May and November 1889. At this point attention appears to have been directed towards a consideration of the exterior treatment. The visits to Cadogan Square, Harrington Gardens and Redroofs were probably to acquaint the clients with the range of George and Peto's work. Of more specific interest was the visit made on 20 November 1889, to Shiplake Court, Oxfordshire.

'Met Amy at 12.35 - left Paddington with Amy and George. 1.40, arrived Shiplake Court, had a good look at Shiplake Court being built - getting roof on - lovely red bricks - Tea in the Clerk of Works Office, arrived Paddington 7.00pm'.

1 December 'Hildenboro'¹⁴¹, looked at model village built by George and Peto, too much like a toy (staying with Streatfield,

Howard Mossley). Hildenborough was the station for Hall Place, Charles Morley's house. George and Peto had built a set of cottages in 1886 for Morley, and a second group for his son Samuel Hope Morley in 1889, in Leigh, the model village on the Hall Place Estate (see Chapter 4).¹⁴² 2 December 1889, 'Hall Place is a large red brick house with stone mullions built about 20 years ago by Devey. Slate roof and overgrown with ivy and creepers. I never saw a more perfect house. So substantially built and finished. The view from the house over the park and lake is very pretty - but deer is absurd - too small, why have deer at all?'¹⁴³ Hall Place, Leigh, was Devey's biggest, but arguably not his best work; an enormous red brick Tudor design which has a rambling, elongated and awkward looking plan.

The final design of Poles^(Pl.269) does share some similarities with Devey's work which had so impressed the Hanburys. The RA drawing was prepared by 3 December. On 31 December 1889 Hanbury writes 'George and Peto 3-4. Our last visitors at Poles'.

The demolition of the old Poles, which was to take only three weeks on account of dry rot,¹⁴⁴ began at the end of January 1890 and was completed by 22 February. Hanbury reports that the builder, Simpson, promised to engage a hundred men in order to complete the house by 1891. On 22 February 1890 Hanbury 'Drove to Goldings to see lodges took away a model'¹⁴⁵ Goldings, Kent (1871-77), being one of Devey's largest and most depressing houses;¹⁴⁶ it was built for Robert Abel Smith, a banker. By 25 February, Hanbury was examining the plans for the electric lighting system at Poles with his contractor Segundo, and Hanbury notes 'Saw many- systems',¹⁴⁷ 28 February 'down to Poles by 11, awfully cold. Home to tea where I found Peto - talked about some small alteration'. 3 March 'signed contract at Messrs G & P,' 12 March 'Down to Poles by 11, explained plans of new lodge at West Mill, George and Mrs L to dine. G. 43 years old today', 13 March, 'Drove with A to Longden about hot water for Poles'.¹⁴⁸ Longden had engaged Norman Shaw to design grates for him. On 5 May, Hanbury records, 'Academy with Amy. Admired perspective of Poles. Never saw so many pictures in Academy and so many bad ones. Drove with Amy to George'.¹⁴⁹

George's Royal Academy drawing^(Pl.270) was reviewed by the Building News,

'The building is sternly plain, with lofty projecting oriels running up to the eaves and dividing the front, with some Dutch-like gables interspaced. The composition is distinctly the work of a capable artist, and if not very fresh in manner, it is eminently picturesque and worthy of Mr George's undoubted ability'. 150

The exterior, described variously as 'Jacobean'¹⁵¹ and 'semi-cottage Elizabethan'¹⁵² was 'based upon seventeenth century architecture of a more English type'¹⁵³ than that usually adopted by George. There is certainly an influence from Devey: in length it is reminiscent of Goldings (1871), in use of gables it is reminiscent of Denne Hill (1871-75), built near Canterbury for Col Edward Dyson, in which Devey used his favourite shaped gables for a symmetrical red brick design in the mid seventeenth century manner, with none of his usual Elizabethan or Jacobean detail. The gables also appear in Devey's seemingly unexecuted designs for different types of houses for the Spencer Estate near Northampton¹⁵⁴ dated c.1876.

Although George used similar gables and red brick, he did not acknowledge his sources in the overt way that Devey was wont to do at Denne Hill, by placing roundel busts of Inigo Jones and Rubens on either side of the entrance.

George relieved the potential monotony of the length at Poles, by creating rhythm with gables, windows and string courses. The (Pls 271 & 272) curvilinear, pedimented 'Dutch' gables had made a rather reticent appearance at Redroofs (1887-88). At Poles it found variation and full orchestration. George would have been familiar with original Dutch sources. At Harrington and Collingham Gardens, George evoked the stepped gables of Northern Europe, while at Poles seventeenth century English examples form the basis of the picturesque variants. Anglo-Netherlandish architectural exchange in the seventeenth century is well documented,¹⁵⁵ and the relationship between East Anglian and Dutch architecture in particular. The basic format of the East Anglian 'Dutch' gable can be detected in examples ranging from those of the outbuildings of Blickling Hall, Norfolk (1624) (the earliest of their kind in the area, according to Pevsner¹⁵⁶), to those of the White Hart Inn, Scole, Norfolk (1655), one of the finest examples of the more elaborate gable types characteristic of the late seventeenth century. The Blickling type of gable, characteristic of the period c.1560-80 in the Northern Netherlands¹⁵⁷,

George interspersed with curvilinear brick gables like those of Brandiston Hall, Norfolk (1647), which had become quite common in East Anglia by the seventeenth century ¹⁵⁸, common in the Southern Netherlands originally. Not that George used servile copies of either gable; his versions are more fully blown, with accentuated curves and high pediments. Devey, a voracious sketcher of vernacular architecture might have been a prompt, but it is much more likely that George relied upon the fruits of his own sketching tours. The use of red brick, diapered with purplish-grey brick, and dressings of Ham Hill stone, was another variant of the Thames Valley tradition which George and Peto had used a matter of months earlier, at Shiplake Court.

If rhythm created by careful deployment of gables, windows and string courses was one foil for monotony, then the accents sounded by the chimneys provided another. The tall square stacks, angled off at forty five degrees to the line of the house, in twos (north elevation), threes (west elevation), and fours (south elevation), touching at the tops, ¹⁵⁹ echo those of Brandiston Hall, but the likelier source is Wealden vernacular. Always mindful of the picturesque possibilities afforded by chimneys, George exploited them to the full at Poles. The chimney of the billiard room, for example, relieves an otherwise blank west gable end. As was the case, in other examples by George, the extrusion is given two small pitched roofs, the absence of an inglenook discounted a greater projection with windows. Characteristically (though unique in that the gable was curvilinear), the two square stacks pierce the gable.

Despite the somewhat protracted length of Poles, George did not subscribe to the straggling and often unmanageable plans of Devey. The plan at Poles was in the disciplined tradition of George's houses of the eighties. The Builder remarked, however, that Poles was

'a long straggling house of a semi-cottage Elizabethan type, in which the effect is got entirely by the arrangement of the windows and the effect of some semi-octagonal bays happily placed'. ¹⁶⁰

One device introduced by George to disguise the length of the plan, was noted by the Architectural Association,

'The house, which is really very long in plan, has been carefully grouped with a strongly projecting wing containing the dining room, to prevent it from looking thin, as a long type of house sometimes does'. 161

Edmund Hanbury's diary chronicles activities throughout 1890. During May, Hanbury was very involved with the provision of electricity at Poles 'Dined with Segundo. Electric light', 13. May 'Down to Poles by 11', 14. May 'called on George and Peto. Met Amy and Segundo at 82, New Bond Street, looked at electric light fittings and at Strode in Piccadilly. How much Amy and my taste coincides fortunately'. By 15 May, Hanbury reports the walls at Poles to be 'about 4' high and on the 16 May he recalls, 'with Amy to see George about pattern of grey headers. George looks very weary. Turner about water supply. New Gallery. Best exhibition I have seen for years. Millais picture of goose clever'. 4. June 'called in George. Drove with Amy to see George's sketches of Nile and Cairo'. 162. 6 June, called on George and Peto at 3 about fireplace for library', 23. June, 'George and Peto in afternoon settled about library fireplace. Unpolished alabaster'. By late July, Hanbury was discussing the tiling for the kitchen wing and on 9 September he reports, 'Settle about new Westmill lodge to be built on opposite of road, look over new house, getting on capitally. Went up to topmost chimney stack and saw fine view of Staltons folly'. On 10 December, 'Having returned from Scotland, left at 10.00am for Westmill. Much pleased with Poles house - think schoolroom low and servants' wing 2 feet below ground - ought to have been no step between that part of house and other. George came in afr'. 23 December, 'Satisfactory talk with George and Peto at 12', 31 December. 'Then to Longden's went over hot water apparatus, kitchen range etc. for new Poles. Charmed with L think him a real and Peto a sham gentleman'.

Hanbury, in a résumé of work executed in 1891, records

'Lived in new wing at Poles which considering all things we found very comfortable. Work at Poles,

1. I almost completed my new house and gave a supper in honour of it to the workmen at Christmas.
2. I built a new red brick lodge at the Thunderidge Gate.
3. I built stables at Westmill and let it.
4. Oak fence from lodge to lodge'. 163

In January 1891, Hanbury met Rashleigh Phipps about the electric

bells and on the 19th, 'Then to Ernest George about glazing of windows which we cannot decide'.¹⁶⁴ George would doubtless have encouraged a note of picturesque authenticity, by introducing mullions. Devey used sash windows at Denne Hill and mullions at Hall Place. Whether or not there was any disagreement between architect and client of the kind to occur at Eynsham Hall (1903-06)¹⁶⁵ about the glazing is not clear, but the final choice of mullions at Poles is successful. On 23 January, the Hanburys went to see George and Peto at 3.15. 'Find servants hall is 2' shorter than promised - much annoyed'.¹⁶⁶

In February, Hanbury was discussing with Segundo and his architect Poggio¹⁶⁷ the site of an engine house and combined. 7 March, 'Then to Williamsons expensive old furniture. Then to Oliver cheap then to where there is more choice but dearer'. 10 April, 'long talk with George and Peto; irritated by Peto and his 'nuances', can't make my mind about panelling drawing room to Simpsons and saw oak panelling - staircase et cet, much pleased'. On 14 April the second visit to Shiplake Court took place and the following day Hanbury settled with George and Peto to have the drawing room white panelled. On 16 April Hanbury met the builder, Simpson at Poles to discuss the employment of the old mantels and on 20 April met Peto 'about the dining room'. 29 April, 'met George there (Poles) and settled to pull down and rebuild landing in stable yard. This we did not do - not rebuild it on the old spot'. Site visits continued throughout May and on the 8 May Hanbury records visiting the Royal Academy, 'Grace by Millais charming, Lingering Autumn and Mr H. Gibbs. 'The Doctor by L. Fildes is the picture of the year. Poles drawing by E. George - good'.¹⁶⁸ Matters concerning the provision of the engine house, electric bells, landing etc. progressed in June and July. On 27 July Hanbury recalls, 'look over Poles, staining wood et cet. Curtains', 28 July, 'Met A at Maddox Street. Tea at Blanchards. Choosing tiles at de Morgan's'.¹⁶⁹

On 7 August Hanbury recalls, 'at 2 Drove in Victoria to Penshurst 9 miles - by Leigh, a very pretty village belonging to Morley and built principally by George and Peto. We were charmed with Penshurst especially the Banqueting Hall'.¹⁷⁰

The east wing of the house was completed first in early August 1891, and the Hanburys moved in before the rest of the house was finished on 1 February 1892. On 8 August Hanbury records, 'Found A and children at Poles which they have made very comfortable. Our first night in new Poles, received many wishes for blessings on us'. 10 August, 'much annoyed about scullery and kitchen where fittings are not right'. 11 August, 'George and Peto's about kitchen which has hot plate all wrong'. 17 August, 'Peto came at 2 and we got a good lot done. Heathcote stupid to a degree' (Clerk of Works). 3 September, '500 or 600 people came to see my gardens and new house, a great success'. 10 September, 'George and Longden came to lunch, good talk with them. The latter as George says is not merely a range maker but an intellectual gentleman. A lot of people up to see the gardens and new house'.

16 September, 'Our first dining guests at Poles'. 19 September, 'Took C and D over house after tea. He admired Hall immensely'. 26 September, 'Strode's man came down about electric lighting. Architectural Soc. at Poles gave them tea.'¹⁷¹ 26 October 'Long talk with Heathcote about noising being all wrong. Think that Peto has got over him. Doveson Sharp's fireman has to go by 3' plans'. 27 October, 'Segundo and Sharp down had it out with them'. 12 November 'Sharp' (of Sharp and Kent, Electricity) 'and E. George came 12. Condemned panelling in Rousdon, E.G. very wroth'. 22 December, 'Drove down to meet Peto at 12. His train very late through fog. Good work done. Condemned Heathcote's drawing room mantelpiece et cet. Peto was very useful'.¹⁷²

Hanbury records 'improvements in Poles in '92'¹⁷³ 'Furnished my house early this year and gradually got every room furnished. Finished engine house et cet. by mid summer also my well after much bother.'¹⁷⁴

Amy Hanbury's memoirs provide the most accurate account of the interiors, in which George and Peto were to play such a significant part in the choice and design of the décor, furnishing and furniture. These accounts show interestingly the rather simple country house taste that George seems to have satisfied so well; and give an insight into the way the house worked for light, views of the countryside, comfort and continuity with old work.

'Passing through the oak front door, you enter a corridor, panelled in oak, with painted tapestry panels above, two painted by Guido Gatti, and the rest painted by myself. Opposite the front door was the entrance to the garden porch, where we often had tea, and which was a delightful place to sit and write in. From there the view across the park was charming and on a sunny morning I often threw open this door, and enjoyed looking out on it'. 175

Tapestry panels were hung on the east side of the entrance hall, which was lit from the west, through a screen above the panelling, allowing the light to pass from the great hall.

'On the right hand from the front entrance was the door leading into the beautiful large front hall. (Pl.273) 52 feet by 22. It was all panelled in dark oak, for when we rebuilt the house and put in the panelling, we had it beautifully toned by fuming.

On one side of the fireplace above the oak was a piece of Flemish tapestry, which Edmund and I bought, and the furniture was in dark oak carved and in good harmony with the hall. The ceiling had massive dark oak beams, and the fireplace was in Ham Hill stone, with the text Palm 127 v 1 in Latin, carved on it. . . On the right hand as you entered the Hall, was the bay window, looking out on the lawn, and the two other windows were high, and done with small panes of glass'. 176 . (Pls 274 & 275)

The fenestration in the hall was typical of George, two windows above the panelling and a large bay window, with window seat, opposite to the chimney, the carving of which was executed by James Knox of Lambeth. The contrast between stonework (in this case warm coloured Ham Hill stone), and panelling, which George always favoured, was particularly successful at Poles. The ceiling of the hall was of moulded oak beams, useful in creating an archaic effect. In addition, George left out the oak floor joists of the rooms above, exposed. To prevent the sound passing through, the flooring of upstairs rooms consisted of a double layer of floor boards, with pugging inbetween. The principal feature of the hall was the main oak staircase rising between oak posts and clearly inspired by early examples, such as Burton Agnes, Yorkshire (1601-10). It was also an arrangement that George had used in the town house 52 Cadogan Square (1886-88), visited by the Hanburys in 1889.

Amy Hanbury continues,

'At the end was the oak gallery. The staircase was beautiful all in carved oak with bevelled steps and no carpet. A beautiful, quiet stained glass window, was on the upper landing and a small one with our coats of arms on the second flight of the stair'. 177

George spared no expense with the staircase, ^(Pls 276 & 277) with its solid carved oak newels, the treads being solid spandrel steps of oak. ^(Pl.278)

Amy Hanbury might well have admired the arrangement since she appears to have played a part in its design.

'One afternoon' she recalls 'I was sitting in the hall, then only half built, when it struck me that instead of following our architect's plan for the oak staircase, it would be better to make a music gallery at the end of the hall, halfway up the oak staircase. This plan was approved of, and the alteration was a complete success' 178

She adds,

'Edmund made a good alteration in the dining room, and together we planned many things useful and beautiful, which added to the comfort of the house'. 179

She continues,

'From the entrance corridor, the further door on the right led into the lovely sunny drawing room, with its ivory white panelled walls and arched ceiling, in plaster of beautiful design. The chimneypiece was in Ham Hill stone, copied from an ancient house in Surrey, and the fireplace was fine with the iron dogs, and old firebrick from a farm house, given to us by Mrs Giles-Puller of Youngsbury and well in harmony with its surroundings . . . when the sun shone through the bay window and the two large flat windows with delightful window seats, the room was a perfect picture . . .' 180

The enriched ribbed ceiling of the drawing room, ^(Pls 279 & 280) panelled in good Old English fashion with bosses and centre flowers was all in plaster. It displayed a rich composition in the arched spandrel at the end of the room over the wainscot screen which divides off the ante chamber, or entrance hall. Mabey and Knox were paid in excess of £300 for the work! ⁸¹As in previous instances where George employed enriched ribbed ceilings, the plaster was painted white, endorsing his belief that,

'As a broad principle I think that raised surfaces and colour are seldom wanted together, a coffered ceiling or

or a good piece of modelling with its projections well considered does not want a background picked out with colour - its light and shade are an equivalent to colour; also a fine painted or mosaic ceiling is best as a flat or curved surface, or with only the slight projections in gesso' 182

George's acknowledgement of restraint was important in allowing ornamentation to be effective rather than over elaborate and fussy. The panelling was also painted white.

George's RA perspective of the drawing room^(Pl.281) shows several pieces of furniture designed by him. The chairs, footstools and cabinets, each of an individual design were based on sixteenth and seventeenth century sources and were not directly related to each other, nor to the room in which they were placed, save in the general sense of being either of the period or else plausible or, as with the lacquer cabinet, actual accumulations. The only exception being the cabinet to the right of the door which, with its Ionic pilasters and enrichments, does have some correspondence with the ornament of the walls and ceiling.

While the height of some of the stretchers coincides with the skirting level, there are none of the unifying details between the interior and furniture that might have been expected from architect designed furniture. George's aim was to produce a picturesque effect - an impression of a house lived in by many generations in which the charm of the olden days was reconciled with modern conveniences. This ambience could be created by introducing antiques and Hanbury's diary for March 1891 records visits to dealers who may have been recommended to him by George and Peto.¹⁸³

George's knowledge of furniture history can be seen to inform his own designs. The armchair in the perspective, with rudimentary wings, was adapted from an early seventeenth century settee at Knowle, and a two seater version had been used at Shiplake Court. The high backed armchair was possibly based on a chair that belonged to Harold Peto and which appears in a contemporary photograph of his drawing room at 7 Collingham Gardens. None of the pieces is a direct copy, but rather slightly simplified versions of existing pieces of quality. In these, and other of his furniture designs, George avoided the very grandly

ornate and drew instead from sources ranging from the medieval period to the mid-eighteenth century. His consistent employment of stretchers, however, showed a concern for structural stability.

Leading from the drawing room was the library, the fireplace (Pl.282) being 'very large and dignified, of unpolished alabaster'¹⁸⁴. The billiard room was on the north front, beyond the hall and staircase. (Pl.283) Opposite the drawing room door, opening off the entrance hall to the left, was the dining room, (Pl.284) projecting south. The walls of which were

'panelled in oak and above was a stamped paper, first of all a pale green, and then painted by Agatha, Rhoda¹⁸⁵ and myself, in deep crimson and bronze...'

recalled Amy Hanbury. The fireplace was oak, and George and Peto designed a built-in sideboard in keeping with the panelling.

'...at the end of the room was a large window with small panes of glass looking out on the Terrace and Park. To see the moon rise over the trees from this window was a sight not to be forgotten. Edmund's study was quite near the dining room, with its own door leading out to the shrubbery and a pretty window, in which he had his writing table where he wrote much, and did many kind deeds for others'. 186

The dining room, drawing room and library were arranged enfilade on the principal side of the house, and when the folding doors were opened a 120' vista was created.

On the first floor

'leading up from the oak staircase was the upper landing above the gallery. From this the large beautiful south bedroom and dressing room opened. The south bedroom had a lovely mullioned window looking out on the park. Next to it was a panelled room, with white panelled walls, and above then a very pretty old French soft toned green paper ... The west bedroom led off the oak landing, on the right of the staircase ... Opposite was the white dressing room with its bay window, looking out on the lawn and the great oak tree.

Opposite the white bedroom in the corridor was the charming blue bedroom, a great favourite with many of our guests. The bay window looked out on the Terrace and Park... Close by at the bottom of a small flight of steps to the left, was the little porch room, with its pretty window over the porch, looking out on the lawn

... Opposite to the porch room were Edmund's and my four rooms in a lovely passage by themselves. My room had a lovely view over the terrace and park and we enjoyed the lovely sunrise which from this

window was remarkable. A wide, rather low window faced the entrance and had a window sill which I often filled with flowers. A small window near the fireplace had a charming view across to the old elms and cedars, and to the steps where often in summer we had tea.

On the other side, opened Edmund's dressing room and bathroom, and on the other side was my dear little sitting room. The ceiling was very pretty, and the walls were covered with a mignorette green silk, and a cream dada below'. 187

Further to the east, were the childrens' bedrooms and the schoolroom with an open east loggia.

'At the top of the staircase (taken from the old house) was Francis's room and then down the passage were the day and night nurseries. The attic passage above was very good and the servants' rooms pretty and airy. . . The back of the house was well built, with a large and excellent kitchen, and servants hall, with an old oak table bound in brass. The housekeeper's room was next to it, and very prettily papered and furnished. The laundry was close by and we did not pull down the old stables, but casing them in red brick, and enlarged and improved them'. 188

The second staircase was positioned next to the dining room and business room. The offices are in a wing which projects giving an L-shaped plan to the house. The kitchen, with which Mrs Rolph, the cook was so enamoured was carried up through the first floor, an arrangement favoured by George and Peto.

The Architectural Association noted:

'A somewhat unusual effect is produced on the garden front by the bay windows being arranged between the gables, instead of beneath them, as ordinary people do'. 189

While they admired the open gallery next to the schoolroom,

'which is both pleasant to look at and a useful contrivance for giving the children the benefit of fresh air' 190

they regretted, as a proper aspect, the inclusion in the upper rooms, of mantelpieces which were not designed by George. 191 These, it was felt, spoilt the general effect of these rooms.

The Hanburys, perhaps encouraged by the sight of the ivy clad Hall Place, at once realised the value of planting,

'I also planted ivy, and creepers of various sorts on the house at once, so that it might tone down quickly'. 192

Later correspondence reveals that the house was deemed a success and George was to remain a friend of the Hanburys. On the occasion of his visit in December 1897 he was gratified to see that,

'the house was generally found comfortable and lovely and similar to your hospitable ways'. 193

Subsequently his name appeared quite frequently in the visitors book and in his capacity as President of the RIBA in 1909, George took the opportunity of inviting Hanbury to the Council Dinner and Presentation of Student Awards.¹⁹⁴

Around 1913, the Hanburys left Poles, which then became a convent school and so remains.

Motcombe House, Shaftesbury, Dorset (1892-94)

Motcombe House, near Shaftesbury in Dorset, was built in 1892-94 by George and Peto ¹⁹⁵ for Richard Grosvenor, Lord Stalbridge.

The Shaftesbury estate had been bought by the Earl of Grosvenor in 1820 as part of the very large Dorset properties which he acquired between 1800-26. Situated on the estate, (which was later enlarged), close to the town of Shaftesbury, which the Earl also owned, was the original Motcombe House,

'an unpretentious building of no great size, which had largely been rebuilt by an owner at the end of the eighteenth century'. 196

In 1831, the year of his being created Marquis of Westminster, Earl of Grosvenor and his wife handed the property to their son and heir, ¹⁹⁷ Viscount Belgrave and his wife Elizabeth, as a 'resource and retreat'.

When the Belgraves inspected their new home they found the house and offices in a very bad state and set to work with a builder,

'planning and investigating, examining timbers, contriving and arranging what could be done to make it habitable'. 198

Earl Grosvenor undertook to bear the cost of very extensive alterations, which included a new drawing room, study and dining room, as well as a new kitchen wing and many improvements to the garden and grounds.

'It really will be very pleasant',

wrote Lady Elizabeth to her mother,

'for we shall be with Lord and Lady Grosvenor at Eaton just as much as we wish, and shall have Motcombe for a resource and retreat for a few weeks in the year alone'. 199

While living at Motcombe, the Belgraves visited the Portmans at Bryanston, the Arundels at Wardour, and Sir Richard Hoare at Stourhead. Early in 1835 Belgrave received the Dorsetshire properties from his father, the Marquis of Westminster,

'for rough or smooth, richer or poorer, better or worse, and independent of his allowance'. 200

enabling him to execute all the meditated improvements and their ensuing life at Motcombe, afforded them an agreeable contrast with

constraints of living as the Marquis of Westminster's guests in

'the chilly splendours of Eaton',

where

'Even in the rarely indulged luxury of Eaton's 'warm bath', the water was 'anything but warm' and the whole house seemed 'cold and comfortless'. 201

By 1892, the house and estate has come into the hands of Richard Grosvenor, Lord Stalbridge, the second Marquis's youngest son. In 1889, the second Lord Portman had replaced his small but fine classical mansion, by James Wyatt in 1778, at neighbouring Bryanston, with 'an ampler, more monumental seat',²⁰² by Norman Shaw, at a cost of over £200,000 thus joining,

'the great club of European aristocracy, not knowing that its days were numbered'. 203

This might have been the prompt for Lord Stalbridge to replace the original, rather piecemeal, Motcombe - although reports²⁰⁴ claim that poor sewerage arrangements in the original house (which used to stand by the fountain pitch), made rebuilding necessary.

While the recently conceived neighbour at Bryanston, had its own impeccable international pedigree, the style and plan of Motcombe continues the pattern established by George and Peto at Batsford (1888), and Shiplake (1889); the style is quiet, reposeful Tudor, Elizabethan constructed in red brick, with dressings of Ham Hill stone. The frontispiece was detailed with scholarly reference to Early Renaissance models and to Jacobean ones. Described by The Builder in 1892 as, having a garden front,

'very plainly treated with mullioned windows with corbels which occasionally diversify themselves by rising in the middle into a little triangular-shaped pediment, for no particular reason. The doorway alone is decorated with some simple architectural features. The general effect is eminently home-like, though of a home of another day' 205

it replaced what was then described as,

'a respectable gentlemanly place adapted for the residence of a man of moderate fortune'. 206

which had stood on the Motcombe Estate.

One of the outstanding features of the house is its highly

picturesque grouping. Positioned within the well planted estate, the new house is approached from the south-west, from the main Shaftesbury/Gillingham Road, through entrance gates with lodge, across the parks.²⁰⁷ This approach offers the finest view of the composition, with the stout, low, battlemented towers, with characteristic corbelled feature, prominently placed, and the main house running away beyond, with its five even gables, above the two projecting bay windows and garden entrance.^(Pls 285 & 286) The main entrance is to the north, where the main block lies back, with lower wings left and right, in the half H plan.^(Pls 287 & 288) The east front was handled with particular effect, with two big gables and the large polygonal window weighted against nothing but a very showy chimneystack rising from the billiard room.

The plan, a formal Elizabethan E, was of admirable clarity and simplicity, with the service accommodation grouped around a central courtyard to the west of the front porch, thus preserving the seclusion of the suite of reception rooms, by rendering them free from traffic routes. The main interior space was handled in a masterful, if unusual way. The most significant feature being the treatment of the staircase, and the great two-storeyed hall.^(Pl. 289) The spacious staircase was designed to rise from a L-shaped vestibule, and open through an upper arcade to the two-storeyed great hall, approximately 60' x 23', which runs east/west, lit from the east by a two-storey polygonal and transomed window. This created a more intimate relationship between hall and staircase than that at Batsford or Shiplake, where they were segregated. As was the case at Woolpits (1885), the screens passage becomes the main landing, and the ascent of the staircase affords fine views along the hall. This treatment resulted in a less historically evocative hall than that at, say, Shiplake. At Motcombe, stone walls surmounted high oak panelling, and the ashlar chimney, restrained in its detail, despite its height, rises to the oak beamed ceiling.

The position and purpose of the hall at Motcombe warrants brief examination. Muthesius singled out Shaw's Adcote, and George's Motcombe, as examples of faithful imitations, and he felt they were anachronistic; commenting,

'The hall serves no real purpose. There is little occasion to use its great capacity, for it lies immediately inside the front-door and is therefore in the wrong position in the ground-plan to be used as a banqueting-hall or ball-room. All that remains, therefore, is to look upon it as an imposing area, the sole purpose of which is to create an aesthetic impression.'

It was found in practice, however, that despite contemporary reservations, the hall could be an attractive area, despite its imitations of medieval precedent. In instances where the hall lay comfortably within the plan of the house, it had often, almost accidentally, become the centre of 'traffic', and a favourite place in which to sit, read, and play games, as well as assemble before meals. George had always been swift to acknowledge this development, as an excuse to restore the hall to a dominant position within the house. At Shiplake, George allowed the hall to replace the drawing room, and although the drawing room made a brief reappearance at Poles (1890-92), it was once again dispensed with at Motcombe, as it was to be at Putteridge Bury (1908-11).²⁰⁹ In instances where the hall was likely to attract attention, the drawing room was often doomed to become an empty, unused room. George had always panelled great halls, and at Motcombe a certain intimacy was encouraged, despite the dimensions, by the hanging of tapestries over parts of the wall space, to combat a chilly atmosphere. It was clearly intended, that all afternoon activities were to take place in the hall, but for good measure, George placed two rooms on the south side, the morning room and the boudoir, the former with its large bay window and generous proportions, entirely capable of replacing the non-existent drawing room. Mrs Grant recalls that the morning room was rarely used, as her mother never came downstairs soon enough to use it, for after lunch she went to the boudoir.²¹⁰ To the north east, the hall opened into the wing housing the billiard room, replete with dais and mens' services. The doors on either side of the fireplace opened, respectively, into the library at the south-east corner, and the morning room, to the south. The east wing of the first floor was designed for eligible bachelors who, Mrs Grant commented, never came.

The service block at Motcombe followed George's familiar courtyard plan, with its proportions arrangement of butlers' office, allowing a clearer view of the forecourt and fireproof vault in the tower close to the business room. Muthesius had always admired this plan, thinking it best to dispose the servants' rooms around a courtyard, so that the functions to do with food, and women, could be put into one range, and those to do with heavy work, and men, in the other. Delivering tradesmen could be directed into whichever was the appropriate wing,

with the advantage that sacks of coal were not heaved past the kitchen or scullery, where food was prepared. Each side had its own staircase to the bedrooms, with no way through from one side to the other, on any floor. The servants' hall occupied a kind of middle ground, where the sexes could properly meet. The degree of specialisation within the service block might appear over elaborate, and representative of an earlier period with its lamp room, brushing room, boot room,²¹¹ room for riding breeches, kitchen, housekeeper's room, steward's room, stores and larders. It is surprising that Muthesius so admired the planning of Motcombe,²¹² yet it was precisely this uncommonly large number of rooms allocated to domestic purposes that to Muthesius 'the advanced cultural level of English life is most clearly recognisable'²¹³ in English country houses. Each domestic activity had its own allotted compartment in which to be performed, and this had a Germanic appeal.

A porch was arranged in the angle between service and main blocks, allowing access to the garden, and an unobtrusive entrance for servants and tenants to the business room. A w.c. and bath were housed in the porch, for additional convenience. Muthesius felt, furthermore, that ideally, the separation of functions should extend to the lines of communication within the house itself, and Motcombe excelled in this respect. Servants could reach the main rooms by a choice of two routes, one for each side of the courtyard, so that in theory the paths followed by each type of servant never had to cross. It has to be admitted, however, that despite the well-lit servery being placed next to the dining room, staff carrying food would still have to negotiate two right-angled turns in the corridor between kitchen and servery - few houses operated with quite the impeccable efficiency Muthesius supposed.

The quality of interior finish at Motcombe was excellent. The morning room, for example, was panelled to the height of the walls, and had a parquet ceiling of particular interest. In an attempt to create authenticity, George used a revived method of stucco decoration which was popular in the Elizabethan period, which involved a free hand application, and embodies a unified composition. It was common practice, when using this type of stucco, to keep it flat, and usually strapwork motifs of the German Renaissance were adopted. The

method involved the employment of a quick setting mortar or Portland cement. It was extremely costly, and examples were therefore relatively infrequent.

The dining room, fully panelled with beamed ceiling, housed a sideboard, designed, in situ, by George, forming a niche with three arches, surmounted by a characteristic high pediment, echoing those used above the windows, externally. The tenor of Motcombe is one of restraint. but also of high quality craftsmanship.

The Dissolution of the Partnership 1892: Alfred Bowman Yeates

On 31 October 1892, the signing by George and Peto of a deed of dissolution of partnership, brought sixteen years of successful collaboration to an end. 'Repeated attacks of influenza and other troubles'¹ were the public reasons for retirement, but Peto had long harboured an increasing dislike of London, and as his desire to find a place in the country became more urgent, the end of October 1892 was the earliest opportunity for retirement.

The deed reveals a number of pertinent conditions and provisions, which account for the anomalies of dating and attribution of works executed between C.1892-C.1895;² Peto assigned his half of the partnership, premises, furniture, books, drawings, stock in trade and goodwill to George for a sum of £2,606.13s.9d.³ Peto also made the provision that George might continue to use the name 'George and Peto' until 31 October 1895, providing Peto received a moiety of sums owed in the schedule. Peto was also, 'so far as opportunity may offer', to use 'all reasonable endeavours to introduce business to the said Ernest George', and

'will at the request of the said Ernest George afford all reasonable assistance when in England and in relation to any now existing work or contracts of the said firm, or to any business which may be so introduced as aforesaid but without any obligation of the part of the said Harold Ainsworth Peto to give any specific or defined time or attention to the matters aforesaid'.⁴

While this must have been difficult to enforce, it does indicate that Peto is likely to have exercised influence over commissions executed C.1892 until October 1895. Peto also undertook not to work, either alone or in partnership with anybody,

'either directly or indirectly in any manner whatsoever exercise practise or carry on or be concerned in the profession or business of an Architect or Surveyor or any branch thereof within the United Kingdom until the first day of November one thousand eight hundred and ninety five nor after that date until the first day of November one thousand nine hundred and seven exercise or carry on in the United Kingdom the said profession or business or branch thereof'.⁵

After 31 October 1895 he was, however, at liberty to undertake and execute any decorative work as distinct from architectural work, but only for people who had never been clients of George and Peto. He could,

however, undertake furnishing work, ie. purchasing of 'furniture or objects of artistic value',⁶ for anybody he liked, after 1895. Harold Peto therefore effectively entered three years of complete retirement, before embarking upon a successful career as a landscape gardener, and designer of villas, in the south of France.

It is clear that George had no intention of working alone, and the deed discusses the likelihood of Alfred Bowman Yeates (1867-1944) replacing Peto. Yeates had been working as an Improver at Maddox Street since 1889, and George was 'intimately acquainted with him and his work',⁷ writing,

'In proof of my good opinion, I asked him to become my partner in 1892, since that date Yeates has taken his share in all the work that has been jointly executed by us'.⁸

Alfred Bowman Yeates, born 6 May 1867, at 12 Gloucester Crescent, Paddington, was the son of Frederick William Yeates, a solicitor, and Eliza Elizabeth, née Smith. After being educated at Haileybury, at the age of eighteen, in January 1885, Yeates was articled to Arthur Cates for three years. Cates had premises at 7 Whitehall Gardens, off Horse Guards Avenue. Yeates was at this time living at 15 Cleveland Gardens, Hyde Park, presumably with his family.⁹

After the expiration of his articles, he appears to have remained with Cates as an Improver, 'during which period' he recalled, 'I have carried out on my own account some additions to Riverbank, Staines and some several other smaller works'.¹⁰

During the period 1885-90, Yeates won 1st Prize from the Architectural Association (Elementary Class of Design II), 2nd Prize, University College (Roger Smith's lectures on Art), 1st Prize, City and Guilds (Bannister Fletcher on Construction). He made a series of customary sketching tours, spending two weeks in Norfolk in 1885, two weeks in Belgium in 1886, two weeks in Hampshire in 1888, and two weeks in Scotland and Yorkshire in 1889. The latter year he entered and studied at the Royal Academy School, and passed his architectural examination in London, in November 1889. Elected an Associate of the RIBA in January 1890, his proposers were Arthur Cates, Herbert D.Appleton and J.M.Slater. After thirteen years of partnership with George, Yeates was elected a Fellow of the RIBA, proposed by John Belcher and William Flockhart.

George's work, executed during this third partnership, failed to achieve the calibre of that of the 1880s, perhaps indicating a heavier reliance upon Yeates than had been the case with Vaughan or Peto. There is no doubt that Yeates shared none of Peto's personality or 'extreme artistic culture and taste'¹¹. Darcy Braddell who entered the office as a pupil in 1902, wrote in his 'Architectural Reminiscences',

'It was at the end of my first day's work that a new figure appeared on my horizon. This was Alfred Yeates. He bustled in - he was one of those men who were incapable of movement without bustle - looked at my drawing, and, being of a kindly as well as decidedly non-committal nature, hastened to veil the obviously low opinion he had formed of it. Yeates did not mean much to the drawing office. He was hopelessly overshadowed by the dazzling personality and performance of his senior partner, who was the only person who ever counted with us. This was very hard luck on him, because he was in many ways an accomplished man who, had he been in partnership with somebody else whose light did not shine with quite such brilliance, would have shown off much better. He was handicapped, too, with such a constitutional disability ever to make a direct statement or give a direct order.

I remember him once bringing in a sketch, 'half inch', he had made and saying to a fellow pupil of mine, 'Oh Reynolds¹² I want you to amplify this, but carry it no further!' To which Reynolds bluntly replied; 'If you'll tell me what you mean I'll try and oblige'.¹³

Yeates was a keen watercolourist, and possessed a fine collection of pewter, which he bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum. He belonged to the Pewters' Company, and in March 1920¹⁴ was elected a member of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution, serving as Steward representing the Architectural Association until his death in May 1944. Yeates shared with George and Peto a love of antiques, and was a member of the Antique Collectors Club, and the Arts Club. Michael Mason, the son of J.F. Mason, for whom George and Yeates designed Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire, in 1906, recalls,

'George's partner Yeates, I saw something of in later years. His recreations were skating and collecting pewter. He remained a bachelor and I believe lived to a great age (perhaps that is why) whether he was a good architect or not I do not know, but he cannot have been as bad as George'.¹⁵

When Alfred Yeates joined George in partnership in 1892, the practice was one of the most successful in London, together with those of Alfred

Waterhouse (1830-1905), and Thomas Collcutt (1840-1924). Although Aston Webb's practice had, at that time only a growing prominence, it was soon to become the largest of all.

Stylistic debate in the 1890s and early 1900s

By 1892 the most famous of the great Victorian Gothic architects were either dead, or nearing retirement, and although Gothic still dominated church building, in all other fields, a variety of mixed styles, freely borrowed from different historical periods prevailed. The notion of a new architectural style, free from historical precedent had grown up in the mid 1870s. Firstly, with the abandonment of the belief that Gothic was the only appropriate style for a Christian country (except in church building), and secondly, with the popularity of the Queen Anne Manner, a style which had both grown out of, and rebelled against, Gothicism. By 1875 E.W. Godwin could write, 'The day of architectural revivals may be setting - I for one sincerely hope it is'.¹⁶

By the 1890s, however, an increasingly complex matrix of stylistic currents and cross-currents was emerging in Britain, and it against this background that George and Yeates's work 1892-1920 must be assessed.

In the expanding forum of architectural debate, two diverse opinions were voiced, both in 1889, to the Architectural Association, and both well received by architects and students alike. The speakers were to anticipate two of the courses that architectural thought was to take in the 1890s and early 1900s, namely Free Style design on the one hand, and updated classicism on the other. But the picture was to become very complex, as evinced by John Summerson in his lecture, The Turn of the Century: Architecture in Britain around 1900.¹⁷

W.R. Lethaby, representing the Arts and Crafts idealists delivered one of the lectures and J.M. Brydon, representing the interest in the upsurge of Classicism, the other. Taking Lethaby's viewpoint first. The Arts and Crafts Movement, with its roots in Ruskin's, The Stones of Venice, and Morris's ideas on the close identification of political and artistic ideas, was to exert a strong influence on architects of the 1890s. A series of organisations had supported and furthered the aims of the Movement in the 1880s, including Mackmurdo's Century Guild (1882-83) and, more important architecturally, The Art Workers Guild¹⁸ (1884), a long lasting and influential organisation founded by five pupils of

Norman Shaw; William Lethaby (1857-1931), Edward Prior (1851-1932), Ernest Newton (1856-1922), Mervyn Macartney (1853-1932) and Gerald Horsley (1862-1917). Morris and Webb had advocated the need for the architect to conceive each design with reference to the particular site and the purpose of the building - regardless of style. Emphasis was placed instead upon the architect's possessing knowledge of his materials and his working with craftsmen, sculptors and painters, to secure fine execution of the design in the best available materials, and keeping contact with local building traditions. Arts and Crafts attitudes and performances therefore, did not influence the visual appearance of architecture, in terms of creating a 'style' in the accepted sense,¹⁹ beyond fostering a taste for roughness, deliberate awkwardness in plan or elevation, born out of 'honesty', truth to materials, and, in the work of some architects, elements of symbolism.

Lethaby, the 'charismatic and enthusiastic teacher',²⁰ addressed the Architectural Association in 1889, advocating

'a creative embodiment of old principles (in) ever new conditions, distinguishing and setting aside that which does not form part of the living thought of the time',

which he contended, 'was the true objective of the architect'.²¹ The argument centred around four ideals,

'One, the 'motive' or central thought in design. Two, that dignity in realization we speak of as largeness, breadth, style. Three, the use of and limits of a study of past art. Four, the reference to nature'.²²

Lethaby maintained that there were ancient architectural principles which needed to be adapted to ever changing situations, therefore precluding the use of 'pure' historical styles. The oft repeated theme, rehearsed in much contemporary writing was that 'past art' might form the foundation for a new architecture, which, importantly was essentially national in style - British rather than imported - an ideal which, as will be seen, was common to the Baroque Revival. By the 1890s. it was clear that members of the Art Workers' Guild and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, were developing a simplified and non-copyist architecture. Their principles discouraged them from ignoring tradition altogether, since one of their ideals was an architecture rooted in the English past, before the adoption of foreign styles began. Architects such as Lethaby, therefore, turned most frequently, as an English traditional source for large scale architecture, to the great palaces and mansions

of Elizabethan and Jacobean times, which predated the sophisticated foreign style of Palladio and the Italian Renaissance, imported by Inigo Jones. Such Elizabethan and Jacobean sources were exemplified in the work of Robert Smythson and his contemporaries, in buildings such as Brereton House (1586), Hardwick Hall (1590-97), Charlton House (1607-) and Hatfield House (1608-12). Their designs could be seen in the Book of Drawings left by John Thorpe (c.1563-1655), and more evocatively, in The Mansions of England in the Olden Time, by John Nash. In 1897, Halsey Ricardo spoke of his generations admiration for the Englishness of these late sixteenth century buildings. 'Learning sits easy on them and, like the speech of their owners, the main fabric in English (and the English, too, of the Bible)'.²³ It was understood, however, that there should be no question of copying Elizabethan and Jacobean buildings, they were merely to be a traditional source for a new 'Free Style'. Consequently, such architects were also to draw from the work of Salvin, Shaw, Devey, George and others who themselves had, to an extent, freely adapted Elizabethan windows, chimneys and other features.

Harold Peto had joined the Art Workers' Guild in 1888 and resigned in 1891, near the time of his retirement. George joined in 1889, but resigned in 1901, and could not be considered a vociferous advocate of specifically Arts and Crafts ideals. Rather his domestic work of the 1870s, 1880s and indeed 1890s, must be judged to form a significant part in the long succession of architecture unselfconsciously based on sound craftsmanship, sensitivity to the use of indigenous materials, and to harmony in the siting of the houses and the way in which the materials of the house, such as brick or stone, were carried through into the walls and terraces of the gardens. All of these elements acted as a source for the architectural theory and practice of Lethaby and the Art Workers' Guild in the 1890s.

The Free Style, however, was unable to enjoy complete success in the field of public and other large buildings, since many of the ideals of the style, such as the use of traditional materials and siting, were irrelevant to large buildings. Furthermore, councils, committees or Boards of Directors, and competition assessors, tended to select more traditional designs from preference.

Another alternative, therefore, lay in the resurgent interest in classicism. The classical manner for public buildings had never

seriously been superseded by the Gothic revival and although C. R. Cockerell, the most committed of Victorian Classicists had died in 1863, town halls and public commissions continued to be built in the Classical style throughout the 1870s. Just as the classical Beaux-Arts manner of France was considered 'foreign' and therefore repugnant to the growing feeling of nationalism in the 1880s and 1890s, many other classical designs were despised by progressive architects for being 'old fashioned'.

It was the English Renaissance or Baroque style which began to gain acceptance, since it occupied an intermediate position between Gothic and the more vigorous forms of Classicism while Kinnel Park (1866), by W. E. Nesfield is often considered to be the seminal building of the revival it is ironic that the new found interest in the Baroque can also be associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement. Mackmurdo's, Wren's City Churches (1883) was important in this respect. Furthermore, it was John McKean Brydon (1840-1901), a Scot who had spent time in Shaw and Nesfield's office (1867-69), who first promoted the style. Whether Brydon, an active member of the Architectural Association, but never a member of the Art Workers' Guild, was, initially a lone promoter of the revival of English Baroque,²⁴ is conjecture, but his lecture of 1889,²⁵ 'The English Renaissance', to the Architectural Association, judged the contemporary mood perfectly.

'The men up for the March examination looked upon it, coming at this particular time, as manna sent from Heaven'.²⁶

The lecture outlined the progress of Italian architecture leading up to Michelangelo and Palladio. Turning then to Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren, Brydon, who had studied in Italy,²⁷ proclaimed them to have created an architecture that was, 'English as distinct from, and in some respects, superior to, even Italian Renaissance'.²⁸ Judging the style to be, 'nearest to us in time and in similitude of requirements, a great mine of artistic wealth',²⁹ Brydon urged architects to study this 'precious heritage', and bring forth fruits worthy of the high ideal'.³⁰

Brydon practised what he preached. While his first major building, St Peter's Hospital, Covent Garden (1883-84) had reflected his interest in Queen Anne, his Chelsea Vestry Hall (1885-87), a restrained design adopting the manner of Wren, with debt to Gibbs, anticipated the revival of English Baroque in his timely lecture.

However, complex cross-currents were emerging. Just as the Free Style, developed from the Perpendicular, Gothic, Elizabethan and Jacobean answered requirements of nationalism, so the English Baroque of Wren and his disciples was apposite in answering the need many felt, for a truly British style, as the Empire approached its zenith of power and prosperity. Furthermore, Baroque allowed for the tradition of good craftsmanship and the integration of painting and sculpture in the fabric of a building - the ideal of unification promulgated by devotees of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Of central understanding of the period as a whole, is the fact that the majority of the architectural profession was unsympathetic to the wholesale rejection of historically derived styles.

Shaw had already recognised the potential of a quiet version of English Baroque as a possible basis for the new national style. Shaw's 170 Queen's Gate, Kensington (1887), reflects the Dutch influence on Wren's work. In 1889, however, the year of the lectures to the Architectural Association, Shaw produced two fully blown domestic versions of the Baroque. At Bryanston, Dorset (1889-94), Shaw adopted a free Baroque with strong accents of a Neo-Wren style, in the immense central block with its two extensive, sweeping wings.³¹ Large additions to the reasonably small house at Chesters, Northumberland (1891-93), showed a more extreme, curving plan, evoking the Roman Baroque of Borromini or da Cortona. Shaw openly admired Belcher's Institute of Chartered Accountants, London (1888) and this building, with its marriage of Arts and Crafts ideas (having sculptures by Harris Thornycroft and Harry Bates; both Art Workers' Guild members), and Baroque style, might well have inspired Shaw's excursion into more exuberant Italian work. There is a distinct flavour of Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh in the Institute of Chartered Accountants' building, although in no other way can it be considered a prototype for the English Baroque revival, since Belcher's direct inspiration was Genoa. It was, nevertheless, to inspire a whole series of buildings by Arts and Crafts architects during the following decade, who were interested in the potential of Baroque for its originality and provision for the integration of architecture and the decorative arts.

The rising enthusiasm for Baroque in the 1890s can be witnessed in the reactions to the result of the competition for the design of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1891, when the veteran assessor, Alfred Waterhouse, selected the heavily eclectic design by Aston Webb and

Ingress Bell. Their design, however, failed to captivate the imaginations of young architects as did the unsuccessful, but flamboyantly orchestrated entry by Belcher, which was to prove highly influential. As in his design with Pite for the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Belcher's Victoria and Albert Museum design showed little adopted from specifically English sources.

Nationalism, however, was becoming an issue of increasing importance. Reginald Blomfield, was to assume an influential role in promoting Edwardian classicism by engaging 'nationalism' as a central argument. This is evident, not only in his writings (his essay on 'The English Tradition', in furniture, was published significantly in Arts and Crafts Essays, by members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, London, 1893), where he extolled 'the great architectural age of Wren and Gibbs',³² but also in his country houses of the 1890s, which are in the Wren manner. Edward Mountford (1855-1908), who enjoyed an extensive practice based on competition successes during the 1880s, likewise placed hope in the implicitly national character of the Baroque. Official approval of English classicism came in 1898, with Brydon's appointment as architect to the new Government Buildings (1898-1912), on the corner of Parliament Square in London.

It was almost certainly for chauvinistic reasons that the Beaux-Arts classical architecture, so well established in France, gained no foothold in England before the end of the century. Efforts were made, notably by R. Phéné Spiers, from 1870 onwards, to introduce something of the French system of organised architectural education to England. but the English revival of classicism in its Baroque form, in the period 1890-1905, owed nothing to contemporary French work, other than its grandeur.

Considered to be broadly expressive of qualities of grandeur and elaboration, English Baroque, by 1900, perhaps echoed the confidence inspired by Imperial dominion or commercial prosperity. Choice of the style was conditioned, not only by these qualities attributed to it, but also by purely stylistic preferences which were manifesting themselves, with growing force, within the architectural profession. witnessed by a number of publications which extended the source material, confined in the 1890s to Wren, to encompass a revival of interest in English classicism generally. These included The Architecture of the Renaissance in England (1891-94), by J.A. Gotch; A History of Renaissance Architecture in England 1500-1800 (1897)

by Reginald Blomfield, and London Churches of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries(1896), by G.H.Birch. In 1898-1901,³³ John Belcher and Mervyn Macartney published Later Renaissance Architecture in England a major source book, well illustrated in folio size volumes, dealing with the period C.1600-C.1780, with a heavy emphasis on the age of Wren. George was amongst the list of subscribers to the book, which included, Blomfield, Brydon, Burnet, Lanchester Mountford, Newton, Runtz, Shaw, Stoke, Aston Webb, Honeyman and Keppie. The book sought not so much to illustrate the history of the English Renaissance, but rather its adaptability to every purpose, large or small, monumental or domestic. It was one of the few books to have been in Lutyens's architectural library.

The gradual widening of influences, to include continental sources as evinced in various major buildings of the 1890s.

George was not wholly unmoved by the Baroque revival, although his work in this idiom is scant and he appears, on occasions, somewhat ill at ease.

During the Diamond Jubilee Year of 1897. Belcher won the Competition for Colchester Town Hall with a Free English Baroque design, moving towards the work of Vanbrugh, which was to dominate his large commissions over the next seven years. In that year George was invited to compete with Brydon and others, for the design of a new town hall at Taunton in Somerset.³⁴ The scheme was first mooted in December 1886, when it was suggested that the building of a Town Hall on the centre area would be a suitable memorial to Victoria's Golden Jubilee, but the Market Trustees repeatedly refused to make the site available, since it meant the demolition of the eighteenth century Market Hall,³⁵ and the scheme was dropped in 1900 in favour of the Victoria Jubilee Nursing Institute.³⁶ According to S.D.Adshead, it was a limited competition. The invited architects included Henry Hare, whose unsuccessful entry for the Colchester Town Hall was admired both for its extraordinary power and massiveness, and for its unusually vigorous, even violent employment of Arts and Crafts Baroque motifs. The final winners, a Taunton firm, Samson and Cottam, had asked Edwin A.Rickards to 'ghost' for them³⁷ work finally undertaken by Adshead, who had been one of George and Peto's temporary assistants in C.1893. The competition attracted thirteen entries, none of which in the final instance, was by George.³⁸

The following year, 1898, George entered the public arena, defending contemporary London architecture when it came under attack from Sir

William Harcourt. The latter's protestations concerned, principally, Shaw's design for New Scotland Yard (1887-90), with its elements of Baroque and Scottish Baronial welded into a strong, free, idiosyncratic manner. George was amongst the impressive list of signatories ³⁹ who wrote to The Times, protesting that,

'of the public buildings erected by Government in London during the present decade it is the one of which London may be most justly proud'. 40

George, however, was never to be particularly active in the field of public building (See Chapter 8), but an interest in the English Baroque revival can be detected in a number of his works in the 1890s and early 1900s.

The first exterior evidence was in his additions to Welbeck Abbey, Worksop, Nottinghamshire (1902). Welbeck, like Woburn, was an abbatial house, dating from 1153-54, becoming by 1512, the chief house of the Premonstratensian order in England at the time when Henry VII dissolved the abbeys. The house eventually passed to Sir Charles Cavendish, son of Bess of Hardwick, ⁴¹ who, at the beginning of the reign of James I, began to pull down the old walls and change a religious house into a seat for Dukes. Various styles were used in subsequent additions and alterations (by, amongst others, Robert and John Smythson, Vanbrugh, Talman and Carr), resulting in a sombre, massive, and rather ugly conglomerate of elements, forming an L-shaped plan. ⁴²

The most compelling interest of Welbeck is, as at Thoresby and Clumber, Victorian, and surrounds the mysterious 5th Duke of Portland (1800-79), a handsome, but 'lonely, self-isolated man' who indulged some of his eccentricities at Welbeck, to the tune of several hundreds of thousands of pounds in the 1860s and 1870s. He built curious underground tunnels which run in all directions under the drive, sunken top-lit state rooms, as well as an enormous glass-and-iron riding school, all gas lit, and heated by hot air. On the death of the 5th Duke in 1879, the abbey was inherited by his young cousin. The Duke's stepmother, Lady Bolsover, appears to have taken the house, in a state of ill repair, into hand. In 1891, building resumed, with the fitting of a Library and Chapel into Smythson's riding school. The designs were executed in 1889 by J.D. Sedding, ⁴³ who died before work started. All the details were therefore by his pupil, Henry Wilson (1863-1934), who also worked with Beresford Pite

in John Belcher's prosperous firm and was a leading light in the Art Workers' Guild. The two rooms were completed in 1896. The Chapel, while affording Wilson the opportunity to develop his rich Byzantinizing style, also included fine examples of Arts and Crafts work. Wilson's altar cross and lectern, together with the font, (a collaborative effort: the brass bowl and enamel panel by Henry Longden and Co, of Sheffield - the inlay round the bowl by F. Davidson - the inlaid symbols by P. Wilson - the sculpture by F.W. Pomeroy, later to work with George on Southwark Bridge (1908-21), and possibly also the light fittings, were exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1893. Given the fine achievement of the Chapel and of the Arts and Crafts/Art Nouveau Free Style of the Library by Wilson, with its luxuriantly carved alabaster fireplace by Pomeroy, it seems at first odd that the 6th Duke should have turned to George, in 1900, to repair extensive fire damage and embellish the facades. The commission, however, can be explained. Aside from his professional prominence, George had designed the spectacular Ossington Coffee Palace in 1881 for Viscountess Ossington, the 6th Duke of Portland's sister.

The reconstruction work at Welbeck was to take two years. The 'Oxford wing', about two hundred and thirty feet in length, added to the main building by the Countess of Oxford in 1743, had been largely destroyed internally by the fire. The wing, George and Yeates replanned completely. The rooms which had previously looked north and south and been divided by a narrow corridor running the length of the wing, were re-arranged to face south, with access from a wide, well-lit corridor. A grand staircase was formed in the wing, with oak columns and pilasters and solid, moulded oak steps. The Duchess's own rooms, boudoir, bedroom and dressing room were situated at the south-east end of the Oxford wing. The boudoir, was designed in George and Yeates's rich version of sixteenth century Italian with chimneys and doorways in Istrian marble and doors and woodwork in carved Italian walnut. The coffered ceiling was also in walnut with colour and gesso enrichment; the walls were hung with silk. While characteristic of George's love of elegant detail, the enriched pilasters of the doorway, the arched-over door and the chimney-piece, look somewhat out of accord with the lofty room, with its tall, paned windows. The State rooms, for Royal visitors, were situated at the west end of the wing.

Perhaps prompted by this necessary reconstruction work, the Duke decided to use the opportunity to generally improve upon the awkward aspects of the main part of the Abbey, contriving, to admit more light and provide a new top storey under a copper roof. At the north end of the house some ill-lit bedrooms were knocked away to create a new dining room and to gain additional height. Designed in an eighteenth century Italian style, with oak panelling carried seventeen feet high beneath a waggon ceiling, the dining room housed a minstrels' gallery.^(Pl. 290) The room was specially schemed to house the collection of Van Dyck's belonging to the house. The stone-coloured walls of the 'Gothic Hall' (so-called for its fan and pendant ceiling of the mid-eighteenth century), were panelled with English oak, and the length increased by adding an ante-hall at one end with triple arches. A dais occupied the other end. A series of heraldic windows were designed for the Gothic Hall by Baron Arild Rosenkrantz (1870-) the Danish born artist and designer, who had studied in Rome and Paris and visited England frequently after 1889, before finally settling in London in 1899. Rosenkrantz, who had designed a fine stained glass window for the Earl of Plymouth's Private Chapel at Hewell Grange, Worcestershire (1884-91), was to work with George and Yeates at Berkeley Castle (1900), Claridge's Hotel (1897), Foxcombe, Oxfordshire (1902-04) and Crathorne Hall, Yarm-on-Tees (1903-06).

Externally, the walls of the 'Oxford wing' were generally preserved, and George and Yeates gained additional space by the creation of two bold projections, with pediments, on the south front. While reforming the upper storey of the main house, and constructing a new roof (copper covered as before), George substituted a bold cornice and parapet for the pointed gables on the east front (which had been a previous, incongruous addition). To the west front of the East wing, they added a central pediment, and a heavily rusticated porte-cochère;^(Pl. 291) to the east front of the same wing, they designed a similar central feature with pediment and rustication, accentuating the three windows with rusticated arches and a bold pediment, forming a centre to the formal garden. The pediment housed the arms and badges of the Duke. To the right, was a projecting bay with a Venetian window, and to the left, a colonnaded portico.^(Pl. 292) Flanking the towers, on the south facade, they added two-bay pedimented wings, with rusticated quoins.

Despite the introduction of Baroque features at Welbeck, such as paired columns and rustication, George did not quote precedents, nor

did he exploit the potential of the Baroque in terms of movement and dynamism. For example, the opportunity for a sweeping staircase to the colonnaded portico on the west front of the East wing, was eschewed in favour of a stately single approach. George showed none of Shaw's daring in his handling of the style. The idiom is restrained, a loose English classicism, with no specific evocation of orders.

The introduction of sculpted groups, by Albert Hodge, at the corner of pediments, and work by J. Starkie Gardner,⁴⁴ in the form of three bronze grills, was completely in accordance with current ideas on the integration of architecture and the decorative arts. Albert Hodge was later to work for George on the Royal Exchange Buildings, London (1906), and at the Royal Academy of Music, London (1910-11). J. Starkie Gardner was one of George's favourite craftsmen.

In 1908, George and Yeates designed a cricket pavilion at Welbeck, to stand above the levelled pitch.^(Pl. 293) Built from Auston stone quarried on the estate (also used by George and Yeates for their additions to the Abbey), and roofed with Collyweston stone, the pavilion was spared a wholly domestic appearance, by the classical arrangement of the facade. The dressing rooms were on the lower floor, access from the pitch being through an arched doorway. Between the floors, outside stairs, constructed from wood to accommodate spiked shoes, created a miniature flight of steps to a wide, columned balcony and the piano nobile. The high pediment surmounting the balcony, containing carved decoration, and the chimneys at either end of the pavilion, were characteristic of George.

Now an Army College, Welbeck Abbey is beautifully maintained.

The St Louis International Exhibition (1904)

The circumstances surrounding the design of George and Yeates's British Pavilion for the St Louis International Exhibition 1904, serve to illustrate the growing acceptance of, and preference for, the Baroque style, on the part of the Establishment, as being, amongst other things, broadly expressive of rising national pride.

The Exhibition, first mooted in January 1899, was the third great International Exhibition to be held in America. The first, held in Philadelphia in 1876, commemorated the Centenary of the Declaration of Independence; the second, in Chicago in 1893, commemorated the 400th Anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. The

purpose of the third, and most ambitious, was to celebrate the Centenary of the purchase of the Louisiana Territory by the United States from the French.⁴⁵ The site was by far the greatest ever utilized for an exhibition - one thousand, two hundred and forty acres; of which over two hundred and fifty acres were covered with buildings. England responded enthusiastically on being invited to participate and on 23 April 1903, a Commission was issued from Whitehall, under His Majesty's Royal Sign Manual, to thirty-nine Commissioners. There were eventually forty, under the Chairmanship of the Rt Hon. Viscount Peel, and these included Sir L. Alma-Tadema, T.G. Jackson, and Thomas Brock.

The Exhibition, planned to include the Arts, Industries, Manufactures and products of the soil, mine, forest and sea, of the invited nations, was clearly seen by the British Government, as a rallying point for British manufacturers. Anxious to emulate the role played by its counterparts in France and Germany, the Government undertook to assist meeting the cost of the Exhibits, thus ensuring that individual competition between British Manufactures was subordinated to the projection of a representative national image. Furthermore, it was particularly hoped that Britian would be well represented in the fields of Art and Education.⁴⁶

Each nation, besides showing its exhibits according to their classification in the various buildings allotted for the purpose - Fine Art, Education, Liberal Arts, Commerce, Industry, Machinery etc., - was to erect a pavilion for reception and entertainment purposes, and also for administrative transactions. In his contemporary account of the exhibition for the Architectural Review, Halsey Ricardo reported,

'These pavilions, with their allotments of grounds, within which they stand, have been used by each nation as an occasion to show off what they can do, and what they have done in the past. They contain a choice collection, some of them, of works of art, and by being intensely national, they introduce a most informing picturesqueness to the outer ring of the amphitheatre of the site'.⁴⁷

That the architecture of the respective national pavilions was to have associative values, conveying national pride and prestige, was, and is characteristic of all International Exhibitions. Many critics felt it to be a pernicious practice which nurtured historicism, and fostered an insular chauvinism which was to continue to bedevil subsequent exhibitions of this kind. This had been particularly regrettable at the Chicago Exhibition of 1893, where any modern elements hitherto developing in

contemporary architectural practice (for example in the work of Sullivan and Wright), were to be completely swamped by the resurgent tide of historicism, swelled by a national pride which called for associative connotations.

Aside from these specific reservations, the adoption of a historical style thought to be truly representative of Britain, was not untimely in 1904, when many architects had already been advocating English Baroque as the basis for a modern style. It would appear that the style of the Pavilion was first selected by the Commissioners, the appointment of an architect following subsequently.

The justification proffered by the Commissioners, while quiet and well measured, disguised a firm determination.

'In making choice of an interesting type to be followed in the Royal Pavilion, it was felt that the Orangery of the Royal Palace of Kensington would be very representative of English domestic building at one of its happiest periods, and would be a tribute to the memory of a great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, to whom, after Inigo Jones, we owe the distinctly English development of the Renaissance of Italy, by which the Gothic and Tudor methods of building had been superseded, From this master's hand there was the wide choice of St Paul's, Greenwich Hospital, and the many fine city churches, but in the Orangery of Kensington was found a building that could be strictly reproduced to its real size. With dignity and fine proportion it unites a pleasant homeliness and simplicity peculiarly belonging to English work'. 48

The Commissioners might be excused their mistake in attributing the Orangery to Wren and not Hawksmoor, since apart from the fact that Hawksmoor was Clerk of Works at Kensington until 1715, there is only stylistic evidence to support his authorship of the design. However, these stylistic links between the Orangery and Hawksmoor's work at Blenheim and Easton Neston are very pronounced.

George and Yeates, therefore were issued with a clear brief. They responded by using a replica of the Orangery as a principal front to a quadrangular building. ^(Pls 294 & 295) This replica Orangery was one hundred and seventy feet long, and had a range of sash windows uninterrupted by doorways, the central and end windows having stall boards under them, forming the entrances. The long roofline (of green-grey American slates), was broken only by the three brick parapets or pediments, the centre one being carried on half round columns and pilasters of gauged brickwork. The walls were of red brick and stock brick, spaced out carefully. White

stone was sparingly introduced in cornices and keystones, to highlight the colour scheme. In plan the long reception hall ended in circular anterooms, a copy of Hawksmoor's original arrangement, itself descended from Easton Neston.

The necessary offices and accommodation for the Royal Commissioners and executive staff were provided in the wings leading from the two circular anterooms, the fourth side of the open court was made by a colonnade, the Royal Arms appearing above the central opening. The character and details of the Orangery were carried through this additional work as far as possible. George and Yeates were particularly skilled at preserving their harmony and unity, despite the deviations from the original.

Internally, Hawksmoor's Orangery, with its choice and delicate development of mouldings in the circular end rooms, and the spatial contrast between these rooms and the long central hall, revealed a direct descent from the gallery decoration and complexity of Easton Neston. George's copy, executed by Messrs Mellier and Co.⁴⁹ had similar niches, panels and fluted Corinthian pilasters, with carved capitals and cornices, executed in pine, which at the time of Queen Anne, was apparently taking the place of English oak; the parts, panels and mouldings being on a larger scale than the earlier Tudor woodwork. The only departure from the original, was George's incorporation of an enriched plaster ceiling, of a type that would have been found in houses of the period - while the Orangery had been left bare and whitewashed, in order to emphasise the delicacy of the mouldings.

Illustrations of the Pavilion appeared in the Building News of 1903, but the drawing was not exhibited at the Royal Academy until the year of the Exhibition. Halsey Ricardo, one of the best known architects and writers of the Art Workers' Guild and extraordinary practitioner of experimental Arts and Crafts Free Style, was unimpressed, not only by the quality or design of the building itself, but by the whole ethos behind the Pavilion,

'The French Pavilion is not far off, and it is instructive to note the way in which the French have taken up their opportunity as compared with our handling of the problem. We content ourselves with a replica, as far as practicable, of a thing once done, and we fill the interior with some choice pieces of old work. Everything looks solid, well established, and self satisfied'. 50

Broadly speaking, the architecture at the Exhibition fell into two

categories - one reproduced, in so far as materials and circumstances would allow, as a reproduction of existing types of monumental building, generally of a broadly classical nature, for example the United States Government Building or Palace of Education; the other type of building created a fanciful confection of festival architecture, for example, the Palace of Electricity, Mines and Metallurgy Building. The official buildings fell largely into the Beaux-Arts style, partly for reasons of association, and partly on account of materials. Ricardo had hoped for 'applications of armoured concrete and samples of light steel construction',⁵¹ but except for the permanent Fine Art Building, there were no examples of such things, indeed there was 'nothing specially novel in the methods of construction. No wide spans, nothing daring in the use of timber arches or trusses'.⁵²

Exigency of time and the impermanent nature of the buildings, precluded much in the way of daring, and accounts perhaps for a lack of craftsmanship detected by Ricardo, 'I never saw a chisel or a plane, except in the British Pavilion which was being erected by British workmen'.⁵³ Like most of the temporary Fair buildings, the British Pavilion was constructed with a temporary wood frame, and exterior walls of fibrous reinforced plaster but the quality of the materials used for the interior woodwork and plaster ceilings was excellent, as was the craftsmanship.

The commissioners had said that,

'The exigencies of speed in execution decided that it must be a temporary building as to the mode of erection, but it is believed that in the careful following of the architect's constructive drawings, the result gives a building that should be good for many years to come if use was found for it'.⁵⁴

Thanks to the effort made by Professor Halsey C. Ives (one of the co-founders and directors of Washington University, School of Fine Arts, St Louis, in 1879), who served as Chief of the Department of Fine Arts for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and St Louis Exhibition in 1901, a purpose for the British Pavilion was found. Ives, anxious to secure a permanent building for the Washington Art School, St Louis, had, first tried to secure that Cass Gilbert's permanent Palace of Fine Arts be built on University ground,⁵⁵ but was refused. Ives, however, was persistent, and George and Yeates's building,⁵⁶ with its formal garden⁵⁷ had been built on University

property, facing Skinner Boulevard, north of present day Bixby Hall. During the Fair, the Pavilion had been used as a gallery for displays, and its large 'greenhouse' windows provided excellent lighting, which recommended it to Ives. As a former student of the South Kensington Art School, Ives's British affiliations were strong, and at the close of the Exhibition, he assisted Robert S. Bookings, President of the Board of Directors, to purchase the British Pavilion as surplus property for the University. After renovation it served as a home for the Fine Art School from 1909 to 1926 when the new Bixby Hall was ready for occupation. The latter was carefully designed with conforming room and window sizes, in order to reinstall the best of the Pavilion's remnants. The main gallery or 'reception hall' was rebuilt completely in the north half of Bixby Hall. After a few years the natural woodwork was painted white and the room converted into studio space. In 1877-78 Ives's successor, Dean Roger I. Des Rosiers had the north gallery, with its carved woodwork and elaborate plaster ceiling, restored to its original, impressive condition.

The Royal Exchange Buildings, London (1906-10); Maristow, Devon (1907-09) and the Royal College of Music, London (1910-11)

The Baroque style was soon to be adopted by commerce. The Liverpool Cotton Exchange, by Matear and Simon (now demolished), and Electra House, Moorgate, London, by Belcher, were both begun in 1900. Insurance in particular, was a rapidly expanding business of the period. The Life Assurance Companies Act of 1870 and the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, giving legal guarantees to insurers, and the right of husbands to insure their lives in favour of their wives, created a situation in which insurance companies could flourish. It was, however, the Tax Relief for life insurances, by Finance Acts during the 1890s, together with sales methods imported from the United States, which led to the building of so many offices.

It was immediately appreciated that evident prosperity was important, both to impress and assure customers who were about to invest premiums. An ambience of solidity and integrity was sought, and resulted in established architects of prestigious public buildings being invited to design premises and public or limited competitions were not uncommon. The situation was the same in the provinces. For example, the Norwich Union headquarters in Surrey Street, Norwich (1903-05) is a notable example of the work of George and F.W. Skipper, a local firm, who were responsible for much Baroque work in Norwich.

By the time that Magdalen College, the Freeholders of a rather awkward, shallow site at the rear of the Royal Exchange, had approached George and Yeates in 1906, with a view to designing a new block, a number of precedents had been set. The tenants of the greater part of the building were the Union Assurance Society, while the lease of the south-west portion was taken by the Bankers, Messrs Hayes.

Belcher's Royal London House (1904-05), for the Royal London Insurance Company, on the north-west corner of nearby Finsbury Square, had been recently completed - a bold corner design, with Michelangelesque sculpture, which rose to a tower, capped by the royal coat of arms. To the west of the city, in St James's Street, Norman Shaw's Alliance Assurance Offices (1904-06), were almost contemporary, and showed an intuitive exploration of classic articulation, and individual mannerism. In contrast was Ernest Runtz's overtly self-indulgent Baroque styled Norwich Union Building (1905-07), on the eastern corner of St James's Street and Piccadilly.

The style adopted by George and Yeates was Renaissance, but broadly and simply treated. The progressive British Architect was quick to approve these contemporary interpretations of Baroque, and commented in 1906,

'The appearance of several public buildings this year which indicate the better development of a dignified Renaissance type no doubt creates the feeling of a better quality about the current exhibition. Mr Norman Shaw's Regent Street improvements, Sir Aston Webb's Dublin College of Science and Admiralty Buildings and entrance to the Mall, Mr Reginald Blomfield's University, Mr Belcher's Lancaster Memorial and Messrs Lanchester and Rickards Westminster Wesleyan Hall, and Messrs Ernest George and Yeates Royal Insurance Buildings are practical evidence of the improvement which is going on in the best of our public buildings'. 58

The shallow site on Cornhill, appears to have influenced the design, George and Yeates avoided obtrusive breaks or recesses and projections, but nevertheless conceived a spirited design. (Pl. 296 & 297). Considerable interest is created by arcading on the ground floor, and rustication which extends to the mezzanine floor. Two deeper recesses, flanked by tall columns extending through two floors, surmounted by pediments, form two slightly projecting balconies, which create dramatic accents. Directly below these balconies are the two square street entrances, while the third, smaller central opening, housed in one of the arcades, is more fanciful in detail. At cornice level, there are richly carved shields, which together with

the cartouches and female head at the angle of Cornhill are all the work of Albert Hodge ⁵⁹ who had worked at Welbeck Abbey. (Pl.298)

The two main entrances are framed in with a carved border of interlaced ornament, and over the doors are bronze panels by the Artificers' Guild Limited, of London, who were responsible for the lift ironwork. The public interiors of insurance offices, banks and similar buildings, were considered an important symbol of wealth. Henry Hare's interiors for the United Kingdom Provident Institution, 193 Strand (1902-06), provide a good example, with walls and desk tops of marble, and a relief frieze, typical of good contemporary sculptural work running round the hall. The walls of the general offices of both Bank and Assurance Society in the Royal Exchange Buildings were lined with marble, and the Assurance Office had a pavonazzo marble staircase enclosing the lift. The Board Room, on the first floor, was lavishly panelled. Fire resisting construction ⁶⁰ with copper covered roofs, were considered appropriate for the function of the building, and both portions had sub-basements with specially constructed strong rooms. Unlike Belcher and Joass's Royal Insurance Buildings on the corner of St James's Street and Piccadilly, of the following year (1907-08), which was one of the early steel-frame structures in central London, George's construction was traditional.

By 1907, the days of extreme extravagance were passing. The economical ebb which had been gathering force during the early years of Edward VII's reign, was to cause a depression which hit not only the building industry, but the national economy in general. More immediate, however, was the perceptible shift in taste - in public fashion, towards refinement, and in architectural circles, towards purer Neo-Classical composition and planning. The time had come for the general appreciation of the long established system of education in design and architecture of the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, a system which had been promoted by some, as early as the 1880s.

In 1907-08 George and Yeates were to have the opportunity to explore Neo-Baroque in the domestic field. The additions made to Maristow near Plymouth, Devon, for Sir Henry Lopes, Bart (later Lord Roborough), might well have coloured George's later domestic and commercial commissions. Indeed, 'the better development of a dignified Renaissance type', displayed in public buildings, shown at the RA in 1906, had been paralleled by an increasing formality in domestic

work ⁶¹ which can be detected in George's plan as early as 1888 ⁶² and which was soon to be evidenced in elevations for Holwell, Herts (1900), Crathorne Hall, Yarm-on-Tees (1903-06), and others.

The work of Maristow involved the addition of two new wings and a porch, as well as various remodellings of the dining room and library. The original house, with which George and Yeates's work was to harmonize, was a rather formal piece of eighteenth century architecture, and this clearly governed the style of additions.

George was not destined to produce a Bryanston, the spearhead of Shaw's 'campaign of the 90's for colossal architecture' ⁶³. George and Yeates's attempts to join the break from indigenous styles in the country house arena are discussed later in the Chapter, and in Chapter 7. The major excursion into formality, to date, being Crathorne Hall, Maristow was the nearest George and Yeates were to come to modifying their version of the 'Renaissance' shown in the Royal Exchange Buildings (1906), for domestic requirements.

The overall design at Maristow was that of a large irregular building, given an E-shaped symmetrical Georgian front by George and Yeates, creating an effect of comfortable opulence, which must have wrecked the scale of the original house. ^(Pl. 299) Broad, shallow bays, perhaps owing a debt to the work of George's pupil Lutyens at Nashdom House, Taplow, Buckinghamshire (1905). The porch, with rusticated ground floor, and segmental projection rising through the roofline, prepares for the central portion of the Royal Academy of Music (1910-11). The unusual mansard roof, tall chimneys and regular dormers, enhance the design, while Venetian windows, favoured vocabulary post-1900, and the niches with statues, provide a welcome relief from the regular fenestration. Internally, the dining room housed in one wing, was to be oak-panelled, the large T-shaped library in the other wing, was to have fluted pilasters of mahogany, with mahogany fittings. Behind, just visible in George's drawing, was a sumptuous private Gothic chapel attached to the house. The work of St Aubyn (1877-79), the steeple served as a foil for the severe horizontal lines and breadth of the mansion itself, with which George had to contend.

The Edwardian Grand Style, in many ways did not allow much scope for George's artistic virtuosity. While Shaw could adapt and produce works of vitality and imagination (for example the Quadrant designs), George's work indicated an inability to handle such elements with conviction. The Royal Academy of Music (1910-11), is a good example of

the coarsening which is to be detected in George's work in this idiom.

Founded in 1822, through the patriotic exertions of John Fane (Lord Burghersh), eleventh Earl of Westmorland, the Academy began its public work in 1823, under the direct patronage of King George IV, who annually subscribed one hundred guineas and granted a Royal Charter on 23 June 1830. Created,

'to promote the cultivation of science of music, and to to afford facilities for attaining perfection in it by assisting with general instruction all persons desirous of acquiring knowledge thereof', 64

the Academy was to enjoy continued Royal Patronage and increasing success throughout the nineteenth century.

As the number of pupils increased, the Academy, originally occupying 4 Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, gradually absorbed five adjoining houses, until no further extension was possible. By 1909, the need for more spacious and specialized premises had become urgent, and the Directors began to look for a site.

The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn was President of the Governing Body in 1909, and among the nineteen Directors, ⁶⁵ was Sir George Donaldson, credited with having played the active role in securing both the site, in Marylebone Road, London NW1, and the appointment of George and Yeates as architects. 66

On 28 October 1909, it was reported that Donaldson 'proposed that the Directors should now turn their attention to another site of which he had obtained particulars', ⁶⁷ On 29 October 1909, Donaldson reported a meeting at the site and quoted from a letter from Mr Ernest George about its possibilities'. ⁶⁸ On 1 December 1909, it was reported that the Committee 'had discussed rough plans by Mr Ernest George', and on 27 January 1910, George and Yeates were appointed Architects. ⁶⁹

The site was central and accessible, being near three main line termini ⁷⁰ and serviced by tube and bus routes. The foundation stone was laid by Lord Stratheona on 14 July 1910, and the new building was completed and occupied in time for the new session at Michaelmas 1911. Officially opened on 22 June 1912, by Prince Arthur of Connaught, the building cost in excess of £60,000. The money was raised entirely by the Academy, although latterly some voluntary contributions were received from well wishers.

George and Yeates's drawing of the exterior, exhibited at the Royal Academy in May 1910, showed a well-composed 'Free Classic' building with a

(Pl.300)

frontage of 181' and a five-storey elevation of 100'. The design was handled with some skill. A dignified approach was created by setting the central block between two low pavilions, each treated differently. A bold effect of verticality was engendered, not only by the central panel of stone, which, distinguished by pilasters, rose from a projecting porch, to the round pediment, but also by the characteristically tall chimneys. Originally intended to be plain, these chimneys were eventually banded with stone; both versions contained arches within, another favourite George device. ^(Pl.301) A range of oval windows marked the attic storey of the block.

To the west, the office wing almost echoed the central block, with a central stone portion rising through two storeys to a segmental-headed pediment. To the east, The Duke's Hall, set slightly at an angle, was wider in section, with a stone rusticated ground floor, in common with the rest of the building, but had three tall, round-headed windows and a pediment containing a sculpted shield.

George's drawing was picturesque, the design, somewhat inevitably, domestic in character, with its tall chimneys and attic storey with dormer windows. The choice of materials also contributed to this effect, although, when new, the Portland stone, combined with red facing bricks (from T. Lawrence and Sons), and thick green roofing tiles, must have created a striking effect. The extant building shares none of the charm of the drawing and although the use of materials coupled with the simple treatment and height of the central block, invests it with some dignity, the building is, nevertheless, rather ponderous in appearance. The disposition of the rather coarse detailing is predictable and does little to enliven the composition.

The central block housed the Entrance Hall, grand staircase and most of the classrooms. The west wing contained the Administrative Offices; Principal's office, ante-room, Secretary's room, strong room, Professors' Reading Room, provision for the clerical staff and the Curator's room; the General Library and the Angelina Goetz Library - a memorial presented by her children. The east wing contained the Concert Hall.

The porch in the central block led into the Entrance Hall, with Clerk's office to the left and ladies waiting room to the right, which led in turn to a corridor running east/west across the centre of the block, linking the two wings. Behind the vaulted crossing of hall and corridor, was the main staircase. In the well-lit basement there were restaurants for students.

George and Yeates's drawing for the Concert Hall was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1911. ^(Pl.302) Designed to seat an audience of eight hundred, the hall had a covered wagon roof surmounting simply treated walls. Large barrel-vaulted halls, such as that at St Paul's Girls School, Brook Green, Hammersmith, designed C.1900-04, designed by Gerald Horsley, had become a hallmark of the Baroque Revival, despite their having no precedent in early eighteenth century English architecture. George, while following fashion in designing a version of such a hall, also attended to specific functional requirements. The roof was of ferro-concrete, the hall top-lit in addition to the tall side windows, which were fitted with a double thickness of glass for soundproofing. The Architect commented sceptically,

'we should hardly venture on such a ceiling as is shown, with a high pitched ellipse rising from a deep cove, at the top of the ellipse is pierced with what seems to be high light wells, and the cove is intersected by circular groins. We hope this will be alright for the orchestral concerts, but we doubt if solo singers will be pleased'. 71

At one end of the hall, under the orchestra section, were green rooms and a stage entrance/exit. At the opposite end, above the vestibule, was a gallery with separate enclosed staircase. There were entrances for students from the ground and first floors of the college and for others, from Marylebone Road and Devonshire Place. An additional exit was by an outside iron staircase at the rear.

The Concert Hall contained the fine Concert Organ (by Messrs Norman and Beard), presented by Mrs Threlfall in memory of her husband Thomas, who served as Chairman of the Academy's Committee of Management from 1887 until his death in 1907.

There were about fifty teaching rooms and two additional organ rooms, and soundproofing was therefore one of the major concerns, double Frazzi partitions, carried on separate joists were used between the rooms. Additionally a layer of sand was used in all the rooms opening onto the corridors, so that no voices or instruments could be heard outside. Another special feature was the sloping way which led from the street to the basement where lifts were provided for carrying pianos to the various floors. The building was entirely of fireproof construction, including the roofs and all the woodwork was teak, used for its non-combustible qualities.

An eminent music critic, describing his first visit to the New Academy, enthused,

'Standing nearly 50 feet from the roadway in Marylebone Road, near the York Gate of Regent's Park, and within a stone's throw of Baker Street Station, the new buildings are unmistakable and have a really imposing appearance. ... Telephones abound; indeed, there is a public telephone installed in the Entrance Hall. There is, too, a passenger lift, and a similar contrivance for the conveyance of pianofortes, a most useful possession in a building that contains over three score of such unweildy instruments. And almost the most imposing room in the building, with its fine oak panelling, is set apart for the Council Chamber or Committee Room. In my wandering over the magnificent building I was very particularly struck by two facts. Of these, one was the extremely bright light that filled the house in every corner. Corridors were radiant, and every room (even such rooms as had sloping ceilings) was beautifully bright and light in the day time - a fact that obviously makes for healthiness. The other fact that struck me very forcibly was that while my guide and I looked into practically every room - and nearly every room was occupied by a professor or a lecturer and the pupils, - not a sound of music could be heard in the corridors. Indeed, save for the patter of busy feet and the brisk chatter of friend greeting friend after the holidays, and for the bright and cheery light, one might have been in the catacombs, so marked was the silence so far as music was concerned. The effect once or twice was almost comical, for as each room had double doors, the top panels of which are glass, it was easy to see some singer evidently singing at the top of the voice, yet to all intents and purposes uttering no sound that was audible to us in the corridor a few feet away. Concrete floors and unburnable doors have done their duty nobly in destroying sound. Indeed the new Royal Academy of Music is a superb home for Music'. 72

Evidence suggests that the building has continued to function successfully.

While work continued at The Royal Academy of Music, George and Yeates designed classically inspired premises at 17 Grafton Street, London(1910-11), for Messrs Garrard, who had occupied a building in the Haymarket for the past hundred years. ^(Pl. 303) Although again somewhat domestic in appearance, with attic storey, dormers and chimneys, the strong rustication and simple arched windows on the ground floor provided a dignified effect, doubtless required by such a long established firm. Fenestration was simple, but the doorway, surmounted by Venetian window was invested with a quantity of elaborate detail. In the context of the progressive commercial architecture of the pre-war period, the design appears somewhat unexceptional, but it was this very reticence which was appreciated by The Architect, who acknowledged it as 'an interesting example of London

business premises in which the client has happily not clamoured for acres of plate glass'.⁷³ It was, perhaps, the taste of the traditional client, that George and Yeates were best able to satisfy.

The Domestic Practice 1892-1920

Although the period in partnership with Alfred Yeates (1892-1920), was certainly less prolific than that with Harold Peto (1875- 92), the domestic practice nevertheless accounted for the larger proportion of their work, and they were still busy up until George's retirement in 1920, undertaking some vast domestic commissions (several of which are examined in detail in Chapter 7).

Despite several works post 1910, the bulk were undertaken between 1893-1910. By the mid 1890s, when Shaw stopped building country houses, George was to become the leading architect in that field in Britain, until he was supplanted by his pupil Lutyens.

By 1900, the English Renaissance style had become overwhelmingly popular with country house architects, those, that is, who were interested in historical precedent; but two trends could be detected - Early and Late Renaissance. This is exemplified by Detmar Blow's Early Renaissance design for North Bovey Manor, Devon (1907), unexpectedly conventional for that architect, and Smith and Brewer's later Renaissance design for Ditton Place, Sussex (1904). While George can be said to be the chief protagonist of the Early Renaissance (the majority of his houses of the 1890s and early 1900s perpetuating his characteristic Elizabethan and Jacobean, favoured since the 1880s), there is, nevertheless, evidence of George and Yeates having responded to the taste for later Renaissance and Neo-Georgian. George was joined in his preference for Early Renaissance by Aston Webb, who designed Hildon Hall, Hampshire (1898), and Yeaton Peverey House, Shropshire (1890), and the elusive W.H. Romaine Walker, a society architect and decorator, who designed luxurious, Elizabethan pastiches at Rhinefield, Brockenhurst, Hampshire (1888-90), and Danesfield, Buckinghamshire (1899-1901). Even Lutyens was to toy briefly with the style, in the entrance facade of Little Thakenham, Sussex (1902). George's houses of this period (1892-1920), endorse the fact that he was no progressive. Many of his clients, however, were new men who nevertheless had solidly old fashioned tastes and wanted to live in country houses

surrounded by plenty of land and feudal trappings, tastes which George was well able to satisfy (see Chapter 7). Despite George being no progressive himself, a constant stream of talented young architects continued to be attracted to his office during this period (see Chapter 9).

George and Yeates's first joint undertaking was the alteration and extension of North Myrms Park, Hertfordshire, for Walter H. Burns (see Chapter 7), which had an original Elizabethan plan of the type which George and Peto had revived in the 1880s at Batsford and Shiplake. The influence of North Myrms can be felt in George and Yeates's first new house, Cawston Manor, Cawston, Norfolk (1896), for George Cawston, one of three principal landowners in the district. ^(Pl. 304) The straight gabled house, Tudor in flavour, has a regular E-plan, with forecourt and service area arranged around a courtyard. The tower is a notable feature, reminiscent of that introduced by George at the villa for the Gaekwar of Baroda (c.1892-93), and a fine water tower stands at a distance from the house. The garden façade, features a five-sided bay taken through two storeys, culminating in a dormer window with flat roof. While the Building News was generous in its praise,

'This is typical of Mr George's best manner with long horizontal lines relieved by gables and towers - a house of sufficient dignity, and tastefully devoid of ostentation,' 74

The Builder found the reticence outmoded and dull,

'The large houses, of which there are not many, present to our thinking two opposite defects; on the one hand, that of overacted simplicity (or what seems so) as in Messrs Ernest George and Yeates's House at Cawston, and Mr Newton's house at Haslemere, 75 before referred to, on the other hand, that of pretentiousness and over abundance of architectural display, as in two instances already named. In short, the architectural study of small houses seems in a satisfactory state; that of large ones, as far as the Academy room is any test, is not so. We want some new types for the mansion'. 76

The steward's house at Cawston shows a simplified reworking of the vernacular used by George at Leigh, Kent in the 1880s. ^(Pl. 305) The L-shaped plan contained hall, dining and drawing rooms, and library, in a low, half timbered construction with three tall chimneys. The attached stables, in similar style have an elegant, central tower.

The additions to Monk Fryston Hall, Yorkshire (1897) for the Hemsworth family, where the familiar, flattened arches, bays, chimneys and straight

gables appear; and the extension of a newly built house, Okewood, Horsham, Sussex (1898) (after its purchase by Her Grace The Duchess di Santo Teodoro), also fall into the reticent, vernacular idiom. ^(Pl. 306) In the enlargement of Okewood, rooms were thrown together, and wings were added on both sides, so arranged as to form a forecourt, the latter entered by an archway through the office wing. Externally quiet and restrained, the house exemplified the point which George and Yeates's work had reached by the late 1890s. - dignified and well behaved, if a little lacking in sparkle; although at Okewood, the high gabled cross section of the west wing, together with the prominent chimneys, adds a certain novelty to the design.

The quiet Elizabethan mood was continued at Edgeworth Manor, Gloucestershire (1900), where extensive remodelling was undertaken. Edgeworth, charmingly situated in the Cotswold Hills, about eight miles from Cirencester, had been bought by Francis James from Henry Grace Wilson Sperling, who died during the sale in 1879. James quickly employed a local architect, Capel N. Tripp from Gloucester, to alter and extend the ^(Pl. 307) house. The middle, eldest portion of the house was built c. 1700 by Nathaniel Ridler, High Sheriff of Gloucestershire (1694), and additions had been made by succeeding owners of the property. Francis James, with the help of Tripp, added the north wing, ⁷⁷ and remodelled the south wing and other parts of the house. The new staircase and gallery were introduced in the hall by the removal of a bedroom above, and were of oak, in the same style as the original.

Externally the treatment was dull and ponderous, the tower, with bell, containing the water supply for the entire house.

Francis James died in 1895, and his son Arthur John James inherited the property, and within five years, employed George and Yeates to remodel the old central portion of the house and the new south wing (leaving the north wing, tower, dining room, ante-room and billiard room intact). ^(Pl. 308) The new portion included hall, staircase, drawing room, and library; while the former dining and morning rooms were considerably improved.

The work executed by Tripp had been in stone, from a quarry on the estate, the walls being hollow, and brick-lined throughout. The building was roofed with Broseley tiles, following the original. ⁷⁸ George and Yeates followed this lead, building their addition in Shelly limestone, quarried on the estate, and local roofing stones.

In 1901 the house was visited by the Architectural Association, who commented,

'Mr George has apparently had a free hand, has not been stinted in expense, and the work, therefore is characteristic'. 79

the house should be considered,

'as an example both of what he has added and what he has left'. 80

Externally the additions perpetuate the quiet idiom of Batsford, Motcombe, and Cawston. The entrance, with its Elizabethan detailing, was the only element of decoration. The interior showed a rehearsal of well tested formulae. The oak panelled hall incorporated the staircase, the oak panelling carried up to the parquet ceiling, divided by pilasters, which rose behind an arcaded screen: ^(Pl. 309) The west hall, pierced by transomed windows, had lower panelling, the stone arches showing above, as was customary in George's halls. ^(Pl. 310) The lower lights of the windows had oak shutters. The Builder objected that the design of the arches, with rusticated voussoirs at intervals was rather,

'too much of a masonry detail carried out in woodwork. However, it certainly has plenty of precedent in this respect, both in ancient and modern work'. 81

The Architect commented,

'The screen is elaborately carved, but there are also a staircase and window recesses. The treatment is Jacobean, and the view (of hall and staircase) could be introduced into 'Nash' without appearing out of place'. 82

The detailing was rich, steeped in early George and Peto; the drawing room had a barrel-vaulted ceiling and the library assumed some of the characteristics of a great hall, having a pitched ceiling with oak beam decoration and tall stone chimney. George designed some of the furniture, including a fixed bedstead. 'Here', (at Edgworth), enthused Raffles Davison, 'we see Ernest George at his best, and the interior is replete with all his old charm; it is quite a picture house'. ⁸³

Foxcombe (1898/1902-04) for Randall Mowbray Berkeley (1868-1942) (later 8th Earl of Berkeley), again showed George and Yeates working within tested formulae. Special interest attaches to this commission, since it included George's last great hall.

Berkeley had resigned his commission in the Royal Navy in 1887, to pursue his interests in science and mathematics. He studied chemistry for a short time at South Kensington, but after a serious illness, bought Foxcombe in 1893-94 together with the surrounding land, then the property of the Manor of Wootton. A moderate sized red brick house, lying on the boundary line between the parishes of Wootton and Sunningwell, Foxcombe had been owned by the Revd Dr H.G. Woods, President of Trinity College, Oxford. At the time of purchase, Berkeley began research at the Christ Church and Balliol Laboratories in crystal structure and the electrolysis of glass.

Sometime between 1898 and 1902, Berkeley commissioned George and Yeates to build additions to the existing house, and to carry out extensive alterations. ^(Pl. 311) The original red brick house was totally engulfed in Cotswold stone, then readily available. The additions included a low wing, containing a large hall with open timber roof and mullioned windows, the staircase and screen being at one end. At the other end, billiard and morning rooms were below bedrooms, the latter approached by their own turret stairs, as well as by the gallery in the hall. The tower, housing bachelor rooms, served as a gateway covering a carriage porch, and separating the new wing from the cottage-like old buildings to which it was attached. ^(PLs. 312 & 313) The kitchens (extant), lay to the west. To the south, the old stone library was added for Berkeley's scientific books, ^(Pl. 314) and a separate stone and tiled laboratory. Berkeley, who was to become a distinguished scientist, ⁸⁴ conducted the researches on osmotic pressure, which was to make him famous, in this Foxcombe laboratory. Collaborating first with Ernald Hartley in 1902, and later, in 1907 with Charles Vandeteur Burton, a physicist from the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company, Berkeley later enlarged the Foxcombe team to meet the growing programme of experimental research, which included diffusion and the stratification of centrifuged solutions. The most productive years were from 1910 to 1914, although experimentation continued until 1928.

On the death of his kinsman Lord Fitzhardinge, in 1916, Berkeley succeeded to the Berkeley estates, thus reuniting the Castle and the Earldom. The castle was in a state of disrepair, and Berkeley, acting as his own architect and clerk of works set about reconstruction and restoration work. It is likely, however, that George was consulted. ⁸⁵

The new wing at Foxcombe, with its half-timbered gables and a long line of new roofs, combined to set off the stone mullioned tower. The British Architect, hailing this as taking rank with George's 'best efforts',⁸⁶ now found virtue in his quiet interpretation of vernacular forms.

'It is pleasant to see such thoroughly English work done in picturesque manner with well-proportioned parts, and for our own use we should greatly prefer to be housed like this rather than in the most original, ill-considered design in the world'. 87

Clearly a comment on the Arts and Crafts Free Style originality, which was enjoying popularity in some circles.

(Pl.315)

Foxcombe housed George's last great hall. Measuring some seventy feet by twenty-five feet, it ranked with the halls of the 1880s and 1890s, long and thin and strongly reminiscent of Devey's hall at St Alban's Court, Nonnington, Kent (1875-78). Foxcombe housed a gallery at first floor level, around the end and along the length of the hall leading to offices. The vaulted roof was common to other examples, but the wider staircase to the minstrels' gallery was an innovation, and does relate in some broad way, to the sixteenth century screen at the end of the hall at Berkeley Castle (built 1340 on the site of the original, repaired extensively in 1497, when it is possible that the upper part was lowered to the present saddle-topped style). The hall had oak panelled doors, panelled walls to gallery height; leaded-light, double-glazed windows, part stained glass, open stone hearth and fireplace, and a door to a stone spiral staircase, leading to the room below, and first floor gallery above. The stained glass in the hall showed heraldic designs by Arild Rosenkrantz, who also painted a portrait of Lord Berkeley.⁸⁸

The Laboratory, occupying a slightly elevated position, west of the main building, had a part single-storey building of stone and brick construction and part-rendered elevations, carried under a pitched, tiled roof, much in the style of George and Peto, as are the stables and lodges.

(Pl.316)

Ruckley Grange, Shifnal, Shropshire (1904), continues the quiet Tudor vernacular. Designed for John Reid Walker, who had presumably left The Knoll, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffordshire (by George and Peto, 1884),⁸⁹ the large residence was probably a retirement home. The favourite E-plan was adopted for the entrance side, treated not strictly symmetrically. The house, in the tradition of Batsford and latterly Cawston, had the

favoured ingredients, gables, chimneys, picturesquely arranged. The roofs were pitched at forty-five degrees, thus diverging from the sixteenth century prototypes. The plan was not published with the RA drawing,⁹⁰ but the west side shows a deep-set porch and loggia, commanding the principal view from the house, rather like that used at the Gaekwar's villa (1892), but perhaps, in this case, prompted by recent work at Wayford Manor (see Chapter 7). The south terrace was between wing buildings, as at Eynsham Hall (1904-08), but the irregular roofs and gables of the office wing are here less conspicuous. The mullions have flat pilasters and cornices, and the building is of stone, the walls of a local reddish sandstone, the mullions and dressed work of white Grinshill stone. The British Architect considered the house to be 'one of his (George's) well known Jacobean houses which is not as interesting as is most of his work, though pleasing and picturesque'.⁹¹

A more successful rendition of the Jacobean style, possibly on account of the smaller scale, was evinced at Greycroft, Berkshire (1905), for Dr Robert William Burnet (later Sir Robert Búrnet (1851-1931), Hon. Physician to the Prince of Wales).⁹² The house, in the parish of Burghclere, on the Hampshire/Berkshire border, is long and low-lying, of modest proportions, with stone roofs and terraced garden. Its plain, but confident treatment recalls work at Eaton Hastings and Buscot, in the 1890s.

The following year, 1906, George returned to Surrey (the area which had served him so well in his formative years), to design Busbridge Hall, Godalming, for Percy N. Graham.^(Pl. 317) For this replacement of a demolished house on the same site, either George or Graham chose to eschew the popular Georgian formality, and return instead to the seventeenth century style employed by George and Peto at Poles, so heavily reliant upon Devey. The house was looser in plan than George's more recent exercises, and was simple in character with the south front broken by three large, projecting five-sided bay windows with balustrades and Dutch gables, being equally spaced along the front, giving a quiet, domestic looking aspect to the house.

The original house had been situated at the edge of one of a series of lakes, with trees and surrounding lawns, the principal windows of the house facing north. The new house, built of local Bargate stone quarried on the estate, with Bath stone dressings and tiled roof, was positioned to take advantage of the fine views embracing Hindhead and Winchester. It was four hundred feet above

sea-level, with a southern aspect, positioned in the centre of a finely timbered park. The balustraded terrace, below the south façade, took a lower level on the south-west side where the hill falls away - serving to marry house and site in Arts and Crafts tradition.

For the plan, George favoured the familiar forecourt, formed by the billiard room, to the west, and offices arranged around another courtyard, to the east. As at Poles, the principal rooms were arranged along the south facade. A vestibule led to an oak-panelled inner hall, with canted bay, window seats, and windows on either side; the stairs being placed in the north-west corner. The unusual feature of the hall was the pipe organ, whose works occupied a recess opposite the console (which was blown by electricity). The strains of the echo organ could apparently be heard through the open carved screen above the staircase since its works were in the second floor.

The interior appointment at Busbridge Hall was as rich as ever, the dining room had full-height Spanish mahogany panelling with superb graining, an open fireplace, and mahogany mantel with panel painting. An interesting feature was the siting of two deep drawers in the corridor outside the dining room, recessed into the thickness of the wall, heated and fitted as hot-plates.

The drawing room had a domed waggon roof, as at Poles, with a delicate hand tooled design. A low fire grate was set in a concave surround of gilt mosaic, the room was hung with silk, and the woodwork was executed in rosewood. The north-west facing, square library, had an American moulded and carved relief ceiling; the ensuite mantel and overmantel were flanked by china cabinets, tastefully designed in the same material, as were the bookcases on one side of the room. The billiard room, lit from three sides, had recesses fitted with seats, one on either side, with fittings for hot water heating. The room followed the traditional pattern of two levels, and was decorated in light oak. The principal staircase, of oak, rose from the lobby adjacent to the inner hall and billiard room. An oriel window projected from the boudoir on the first floor, into the staircase hall. While the restrained design owed much to the George and Peto preference for Jacobean, the green shutters reflected the current fashion for formality. The RA drawing showed

none of George's picturesque facility, and was certainly by an assistant.

In 1908, in his seventieth year, George designed what was to be the last recorded house in his characteristic, 'loose' Elizabethan style, Putterbridge Bury, Hertfordshire for T.M.Clutterbuck. It formed George's last spirited fling in the country house field, having a ballroom, library, boudoir, hall, billiard room, business room, dining room, and gun room, even at this late date: There was, however, no drawing room, its function had been taken over by the hall. The main house showed a return to the E-plan, with two canted bays serving the billiard room and hall. As was the case with Elizabethan prototypes, the hall did not occupy the centre of the façade. George once again ⁹³ separated the staircase and hall by a row of stone arches; the second bay belonged to the billiard room, unusually placed along the south facade, alongside the business room. The ballroom and dining room formed the wings to the north. Internally, the pièce de resistance was the hall, with its stone walls above the richly panelled late Gothic linen-fold dado. The ceiling had moulded oak beams and joists, and the hall incorporated a plain stone fireplace. The generous service wing was grouped around a courtyard; the south-east corner of which, formed an arcaded loggia with views across the gardens, providing convenient access for serving tea. Again, the tenor of the service wing evoked work at Ascot and Leigh, in the 1880s. The roofs were constructed of oak barge boards and eaves, instead of copings and parapets, and the mullioned windows were oak and not stone. This variation of treatment between the main house and service wing had been tried less effectively perhaps at Foxcombe (1902). At Putteridge Bury, the juxtapositioning of Elizabethan and a more homely vernacular, successfully animated the design. George's treatment of the vernacular in the 1890s and early 1900s had shown an increasing restraint, leading in some cases to a dilution of impact. Putteridge Bury showed a welcome return to earlier, richer work, often sadly abandoned in the larger commissions between 1900 and 1910.

Built from brick, the house had mullions and dressings of Doulton stone, and a stone slated roof. One unusual feature in its

construction was the employment of small bricks for the walls, six courses to the foot; these unusually small bricks were specially made on the estate.

The design of the house, hung when George was President of the RIBA, was not received with wild enthusiasm, since by then, such an exercise in Elizabethan would have been considered outdated. Furthermore, the house incorporated outmoded provisions,

'Putteridge Bury, Herts is an Elizabethan-like mansion though akin to many an old one, it looks somewhat over windowed, making a fine manor hall more glass than wall...' 94

and

'it has, moreover, a spacious plan and includes a terraced garden, at one corner of which, at the angle of the building is a quaint loggia or verandah porch, again typical of Messrs Ernest George and Yeates architectural repute, which, however we may suggest will scarcely be enhanced by this well-grouped, if not particularly interesting addition to their commissions'. 95

While making alterations and additions to Maristow, Devon in 1909 in the English Baroque style, George and Yeates showed their versatility in their design for Encombe, Sandgate, Kent (1908-09).^(Pl.321) Built for a widow, Mrs Matthew John Bell (d 1911), mother of Lady Sackville-West, Encombe occupied a site nestling beneath the wooded escarpment of Shorncliffe, Sandgate. Mrs Bell purchased the site (part of the Undercliffe properties, which adjoined the gardens of an original Encombe House, C.1822 demolished C.1885, from her sister), the Countess of Arran in 1906. George and Yeates's design was quite modest in scale, but the arrangement and purpose of the rooms are telling indications of the changing requirements of pre-war domestic architecture; drawing room and dining rooms, hall, smoking room and pantry -offices and garage provision for 'motors'. While the cultivation of horizontality in the design, the bays to the south-facing dining and morning rooms and the roughcast lower storey are reminiscent of Voysey at Broadleys, Windermere (1898-99), the weather-tiles, gabled upper-storey, tall brick chimneys, arcaded loggia between the smoking and drawing rooms and the mullioned windows of the smoking and drawing rooms recapitulate earlier work of the 1880s. The builders were Messrs Davis and

Leaney of Goudhurst and R.O.Norris acted as Clerk of Works, later to work in the same capacity at the Royal Academy of Music (1910-12). Encombe was inherited by Edward Charles Sackville-West, after his mother's death in 1920. He sold the property to Ralph H. Philipson in 1922, who found the site 'astonishingly beautiful', but the house 'quite intolerable'.⁹⁶ He therefore immediately employed Basil Ionides to redesign and extend Encombe to form a 'modern villa'.⁹⁷

The Response to Neo-Georgian

An interest in the late Renaissance did not fully manifest itself until the late 1890s, and then it was accompanied by Neo-Georgian. Intimation of its arrival can be traced back to the 1860s. Bodley's vicarage to St Martin's, Scarborough (1863), may well be a very early precursor of an eighteenth century manner, followed by W.E.Nesfield's Kinmel Park, Derbyshire (1868-74), Webb's Smeaton Manor near North Allerton, Yorkshire (1877-79), and Wilfred Scawen Blunt's Crabbet Park, Worth, Sussex (1872-73). Shaw's 170 Queen's Gate, Kensington (1888-90), with its combination of Wren and Dutch motifs, was to be the precursor of much of the domestic work of the 1890s, and with Bryanston, the style was almost formulated. By 1890, elements of the later Renaissance were taken up, but used asymmetrically. Symmetrical designs began to make their appearance at the Royal Academy in 1898.

The later Renaissance itself could be seen as having two components. The sturdy, full-blooded style of the mid-seventeenth century was favoured for big country houses in the late 1890s. Blomfield's remodelling of Heathfield Park, Sussex, from 1898⁹⁸ led the vanguard, and he continued the trend in his design for a smaller country house, Whittington, Buckinghamshire,⁹⁹ for Hudson Kearley. Blomfield developed this manner in a number of substantial Edwardian commissions, notably Moundsmere Manor, Hampshire (1908-09), with its flavour of Wren's work at Hampton Court Palace, and he was still employing it in 1912, at Wrethan Hall, Norfolk. Blomfield's cousin, A.C.Blomfield, who had been in George's office in 1888¹⁰⁰ had rebuilt Standsted Park, Sussex, after a fire in 1900, a perfect essay in the style of Wren.

Clearly, this style was too heady for smaller country houses, and a taste for Neo-Georgian can be detected at the turn of the century, derived from the discreet eighteenth, rather than seventeenth century precedents. The varied types of Arts and Crafts houses built during the early 1890s show little more than the occasional classical detail, for example, Lethaby's window at The Hurst, Four Oaks (1893). The leading spirits in the fully-blown revival are generally accepted as being Ernest Newton and Mervyn Macartney, although other architects were accepting that rural Georgian buildings of the late seventeenth century were part of the fabric of the countryside. A number of the Art Workers' Guild architects in particular, were adopting a free Wren type of house design in the late 1890s. Leonard Stokes's Shooter's Hill House, Pangbourne (1898) is undeniably Free Neo-Georgian, despite its experimental plan. Although some architects, like George's pupil Lutyens, only occasionally used Georgian for exteriors, classical details had constantly been employed for fireplaces, cornices, and staircases, since the early 1880s. Macartney was to become sole editor of the Architectural Review magazine founded in 1896 and, like Country Life, taking advantage of new techniques for printing photographs. Furthermore, in 1906, the Architectural Review began publishing a series called 'The Practical Exemplar of Architecture', which every month carried eight or nine pages of details: gate piers, chimney stacks, doorways - mostly from eighteenth century buildings - providing a handbook for correct Neo-Georgian. Despite George's preference for Early Renaissance in large country house work, he was not unmoved by the contemporary interest in the Late Renaissance and Neo-Georgian - indeed he was to make a distinct contribution to the growing undercurrent of formality. In an attempt to make the Queen Anne style of the 1870s and 1880s sufficiently dignified for country house work, many architects, including George, omitted the more fanciful elements of the style, and concentrated on symmetry. The results often tended towards fairly straightforward imitations of seventeenth century houses, as was the case with Dunley Hill (1886) (see Chapter 5). George had never favoured the fully fledged Old English plans of Devey, Shaw and others (see Chapter 4), and a greater note of formality, always nascent in George and Peto's work, began to appear to lesser and greater degrees in the designs of the late 1880s. Classical features and accents appeared in the group of houses of 1888. Rosehill, Henley, a tight

composition, had a large double gable containing linked Venetian windows, G.D. Pollock's house at Bagshot, of the same year, sported a frankly classical porch. Eastcote Lodge, Pinner, showed an early adoption of a loose, Early Georgian style, with its symmetrical wings, Venetian and sash windows, brick pilasters and Ionic capitals. Some of this work, Eastcote Lodge in particular, was to anticipate later work by pupils, such as Arnold Mitchell, who were to adopt the Neo-Georgian manner in the early 1900s (see Chapter 9).

Two commissions to alter and make additions to original Georgian houses must be seen as significant in steering George's course towards formality, namely Colworth, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire (1894-95), and Shockerwick, Bathford, Somerset (1896 and 1907).

In 1891, William Clarence Watson purchased Colworth House, Bedfordshire. The handsome house, designed by Mark Antonie, was Early Georgian, of ashlar, with a three bay pediment. There are segmental-headed windows, and the quoins of even length are characteristically Early Georgian. ^(Pl. 322) The house had been in the hands of the Magniac family since C.1854:- first belonging to Hollingworth Magniac (d 1867), and subsequently to his son, Charles (d.1891). George and Yeates ¹⁰¹ were commissioned to remodel and, in part, rebuild the house. Major alterations were executed at the rear of the house, where an extension bears a plaque dated ^(Pls 323 & 324) 1894. Work included the design of a long oak-panelled hall in a loosely Classical idiom, with stone chimneys at either end, in Hopton Wood stone. ^(Pls 325 & 326) The quiet Neo-Georgian style of the exterior is echoed in George's loosely classical designs for fitted furniture, including a sideboard.

In 1896, when Brydon was working on his second commission in Bath ¹⁰² adding a Museum and Art Gallery in English Baroque style, to his north wing of the Guildhall, George was to execute considerable alterations and additions to nearby Shockerwick House, Bathford, just outside the city, on the Wiltshire border. The property had come into the ownership of Charles Morley, the wealthy third son of Samuel Morley, both established clients of George (see Chapters 2 and 4).

The considerable Shockerwick Estates, together with the original house dating from C.1630, had been acquired C.1740 by the Wiltshires,

a prominent family in Bath, and owners of one of the carrier services between Bath and London. Walter Wiltshire, Mayor of Bath in 1772, 1780 and 1791, and a friend of Gainsborough,¹⁰³ commissioned John Wood the Elder, c.1750, to replace the largely ruinous manor house, probably intended to be no more than a country villa or occasional residence, since it was built only one room thick.

Wood's elegant Palladian replacement on the original, attractive site, its western wing incorporating much of the older house with its stone mullioned windows, was of Bath stone, and overlooked by Brook. The east front has nine windows, and a five-bay centre with two low, two-windowed wings adjoined the centre block. The latter had a pediment above Corinthian half columns, and a boldly rusticated base. It is thought¹⁰⁴ that changes might have been made, either at the time of Wiltshire's last mayoralty in 1791, or perhaps soon after his death in 1799; these might have included the backward enlargement of the house and the insertion of a main staircase (whose top flight survives), some front windows were enlarged, and some rooms have cornices of this period. A measured drawing of the house, now in the Bath City Library, mentions John Palmer as the architect connected with Shockerwick, and it seems likely that Palmer was responsible for these changes. The charming green house might well have been by Palmer, its urns are similar to those at Lansdown Crescent.

The Wiltshires remained at Shockerwick until the 1860s, remaining important landowners in Bathford Parish. Charles Morley, then MP for Breconshire, bought the house sometime later, and set about making considerable additions and alterations with the help of George and Yeates in 1896. George added upper storeys to the wings of Shockerwick, designed a new servants' wing, and made changes to the back elevation, and redecorated some rooms.¹⁰⁵ The work is well-behaved and tasteful. The entrance front, simpler in elevation than the east garden front, had a four column portico which, although resembling stone, is executed in wood with hollow columns. A Venetian window with a pediment appears on the first floor, surmounted by a simple tripartite window. The portico, with segmental arch and pronounced entasis of the columns, is somewhat ponderous, and recalls that of G.D. Pollock's house at Bagshot, designed by George in 1888.^(Pl.330)

George also intended to add stables, in a quiet Georgian vernacular, exhibiting his design at the RA.¹⁰⁶ (Pl.305) He also built a rather Lutyenesque lodge to the south. In 1907 George and Yeates were to add a one-storey billiard room to the west front, with a wide bow-window and excellent internal panelling.^(Pl.331) The encounters with these original Georgian houses must have reinforced George's interest in the style.

By the turn of the century, some architects were moving towards more compact plans and symmetrical facades; for example, James Ransome's sketch design for a house in the New Forest, exhibited at the RA in 1899.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, others like Macartney and Newton, favoured a more flexible interpretation. Their work is not Neo-Georgian in any strict sense, but rather inspired by admiration for late Stuart, and William and Mary work, rather than that of the George's. Macartney's quiet design for Frithwood House, Northwood (1900), and Newton's Steep Hill, near St Helier, Jersey (1902-04), illustrate this point. Horace Field's, 4 Cowley Street, Westminster of 1905, however, shows a fuller commitment to Neo-Georgian.

George and Yeates's design for alterations to Holwell, Hertfordshire, exhibited at the RA in 1900,^(Pl.332) shows them producing something not far removed from a reproduction of a small early Georgian manor house. Situated a few miles from Hatfield and North Myms Park, the house had an E-plan, with porch and wings to the north, and a loggia filling the space between the wings to the south. The symmetry was interrupted only by the necessity of a water tower rising from the offices to the east. The Builder regretted the lack of plan,

'the exterior view of Holwell, Herts, no plan, shows how an old house had been altered and enlarged in such a manner as to preserve its general character'. 108.

The British Architect concluded,

'It is not a design of the heroic sort, but just that pleasantly picturesque sort of house we never get too much of'. 109

The style was studiously simple Georgian, with hints of previous works, brick pilasters from Dunley Hill (1887-88), and Eastcote Lodge (1888), and shaped central gables from Poles (1890-92), and Redroofs (1888-89), looking back to Devey. The Architect remarked,

'the house indicates the control which has been exercised rather commonly this year. There is not so much a disturbance from a large number of ornamental details as was in vogue a few years ago'. 110

Woodside, Esher, Surrey (1912), for A.H. Moreing, was a more spirited variation of late Renaissance, in grey-brown Sussex bricks. (Pl. 333)
The main front sported a pedimented portico in stone, and a semi-circular stone porch on the return side, against the south wall of the drawing room. The plan shows a large hall, with billiard table recess and open loggia at one end.

George's last recorded design, for a house, St Chad's Wood, near Kidderminster, Worcestershire, for A.R. Goodwin, was published in 1918, although it was to be built after the war. (Pl. 334) The style was a quiet, respectful Neo-Georgian, to be executed in local sandstone. A rusticated central bay, surmounted with segmental pediment affording the only decoration. George appears to have been influenced here by his own pupils, the design, however retains the 'English Homeliness' characteristic of his earlier works.

Queen Alexandra's Court, St Mary's Road, Wimbledon, London (1904-05, 1908 and 1912).

In 1902, George and Yeates were invited to be honorary architects, together with C.E.Lancaster Parkinson¹¹¹ for the design of a series of blocks of flats for 'necessitous widows and daughters of officers',¹¹² to form Queen Alexandra's Court, Wimbledon. The scheme arose out of the efforts of Sir James Gildea who, in 1886, started an officers' branch of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, with the object of providing financial grants to necessitous officers' widows. In 1898, the idea of providing homes for these ladies was conceived by Sir James, and twelve flats on one staircase were rented in Elm Park Mansions, for this purpose. This venture proved highly successful, and as a result, a site of three and a half acres was purchased at Wimbledon and the building of purpose designed accommodation began. Subscriptions to a fund were invited, and the buildings were named after Queen Alexandra, who contributed £5,000 from her war fund.

The qualifications for eligibility were that the officer's daughter or widow, who occupied one of the flats must be between fifty and eighty years old, with an income of between £40 and £100 a year. They were allowed two daughters or nieces, or other female relatives to live with them. The arrangement being that they were to live free of rent and taxes, the only charge being for gas and electric light. The accommodation comprised sixty small flats, housed in four blocks, arranged around three sides of a quadrangle. The two smaller blocks each had twelve self-contained flats, while the others possessed fifteen each.

Quite how and why the responsibility for designing was apportioned between George, Yeates and Parkinson is unclear, but the design the firm showed how a Wren-like manner could be used for a block of flats. It forms an interesting example of one of the solutions to the treatment of large blocks and repeated units in garden suburb architecture, and George succeeded very well in creating a design which reads perfectly well as a 'big house', indeed, it might almost be a very plain country house, even though it incorporates fifteen dwellings.

Quick and sensitive in his response to the fact that symmetry on such a scale might lead to monotony and an institutional image, which contemporary London County Council architects were at such pains to

avoid, George invoked various devices to eschew blandness and invest the buildings with a dignity normally associated with country houses. The length of the rectangular block is diffused by a division down the centre, using stone quoins to accord with those at either end. The device is effective, the block is visually divided, but at the same time its unity remains undisturbed. Two white bays stand proud of the brick facade, housing the staircases. Further dramatic accents were provided by the dark archways, stair windows and arched doorways, the whole is capped by characteristically steep gables. The blocks have high pitched roofs and tall chimneys, creating a pleasant rhythm, and the stone rustication at ground floor level further enhances the evocation of seventeenth century work.

The problems surrounding the design of aesthetically pleasing, but low-cost, mass housing had engaged the attention of architects for half a decade. The reorganisation of local government in the 1880s had brought new impetus to large state housing within existing cities. In particular, the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act, gave the recently created London County Council responsibilities and powers to embark upon massive slum clearance and rehousing programmes. The newly formed London County Council Architects' Housing Division (1893), under the outstanding leadership of Owen Fleming, had, by the turn of the century attracted a whole host of talented young architects,¹¹³ infused with the social ideals of Morris on the one hand, and the influence of their architectural mentor, Philip Webb on the other. They might well have met Morris and Webb through the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

The Division's early achievements included the Boundary Street Estate, Shoreditch (1894-1900), and the Millbank Estate, Westminster (1899-1903), and their choice of a Webb-inspired vernacular makes an interesting comparison with George's solution at Wimbledon. The former shows a desire to avoid symmetry, by adopting Arts and Crafts FreeStyle, while the latter shows an adept rendering of the increasingly fashionable Neo-Georgian. A slight influence of the earlier London County Council work can be detected in George's use of white, contrasting with red brick. The doorways to the staircases and circular windows recall entrances at Boundary Street, though in a different idiom. The proportions of George's design looks back to 170 Queen's Gate by Shaw (1888-90).

Each flat consisted of a sitting room, two bedrooms and a kitchen. The floors were parquet, the walls distempered, and there were sound locks, doors and cupboards, with gas stoves for cooking, and grates in all the rooms. This accommodation compared very favourably with provision by the London County Council, who at Boundary Street calculated on two people to a room.

While George chose to invest dignity by using the Neo-Georgian style in this particular instance, it is of no small significance that progressive thought¹¹⁴ in the London County Council led to the design of cottage estates,¹¹⁵ which were to draw more heavily upon the vernacular work of architects of the Domestic Revival, notably Devey, Shaw and George, as well as the more recent work by Parker and Unwin at New Earswick, near York (1902-), Letchworth, Hertfordshire (1903-), and Hampstead Garden Suburb, London (1905-).

The Model Villages: Port Sunlight, Merseyside (1898-1901) and
The Whiteley Village, Surrey (1914-21).

1898 marked the publication of the drawing by George and Yeates of seven cottages to be built at Port Sunlight,¹¹⁶ the well publicised and influential philanthropic exercise undertaken by William Hesketh Lever, later Lord Leverhulme. The first sod had been cut in 1888, but building continued into the 1920s. A wide variety of architects were to contribute to the scheme, to house employees of Lever's Sunlight Soap factory. Lever, being something of a thwarted architect, fulfilled personal ambitions, not only with the scheme at Port Sunlight, but also by providing funds for the development of a Department of Architecture and Town Planning, at the University of Liverpool.

George, Peto and Yeates had, however, been quietly contributing to the groundswell of taste and opinion which was to come to the fore, in the rapid development of town planning schemes in the 1880s through to the First World War. Port Sunlight, Bornville, New Earswick, Letchworth, Hampstead Garden Suburb, and numerous cottage estates in the provinces, were the tangible evidence of a growing awareness of the need for planned domestic schemes.¹¹⁷ George, in particular brought to bear a wealth of experience in terms of the small house. Not only had he

produced groups of cottages at Chislehurst,¹¹⁸ Guildford,¹¹⁹ and village schemes at Leigh¹²⁰ and Buscot,¹²¹ but he had also designed whole series of exquisitely apposite, economic, yet picturesque lodge and estate houses, to complement his country houses all over the country. It seems only appropriate that he should have participated in projects such as Port Sunlight and Whiteley Village, particularly the former which commanded such international interest and admiration.

Lever was well aware of George's merits in this field, witnessed in his toast to George as President of the RIBA at the Annual Dinner of 1909, when he remarked that,

'He made Mr Ernest George's acquaintance many years ago, and he had always been a great admirer of his work, for Mr George had done much to solve the difficult problem of making a home that was really a home beautiful in all its parts, and yet convenient for modern usages, without degenerating into the appearance of town halls or public institutions such as workhouses, as was so often the case. Mr Ernest George had realised the ideals of the English home - beautiful in every way - and they had reason to be proud of their President, as he had reason to be proud that at Port Sunlight they had some beautiful examples of his work'. 122

Lever was much preoccupied with the issue of good, cheap housing, by as he said,

'availing ourselves of what modern science and art placed at the disposal of our architects today to enable them to solve this great problem'. 123

George and Yeates built a total of nineteen cottages at Port Sunlight between 1898-1901, seven on the New Chester Road in 1899,^(Pls 335 & 336) and 25-29^(Pls 337 & 338) and 33-39 Greendale Road in 1901. They all bear witness to his extraordinary ability to plan on the small scale prescribed by Lever. While the group in New Chester Road are arranged around three sides of a quadrangle and in Neo-Georgian style, 33-39 Greendale Road form a strong, Voysey-like block, with bold chimneys, large horizontal windows and clear, white rendered walls.^(Pl.339) The excellence of these groups relies, once again, upon the clever way in which George plans a number of dwellings into a single block without losing the sense of a familiar house-like character.

The development of Port Sunlight was lengthy, 1888 to the 1920s, and as a consequence, several of George's pupils are represented, namely Lutyens, 17-23 Corniche Road (1897), and Bradshaw and Gass, 2-14 Central Road and 11-21 Primrose Hill, both 1906.

'The Whiteley Village is as successful an achievement as one would expect from the brilliant Yorkshire acumen that its founder displayed in building his world-famous emporium. It represents a great idea admirably carried out'. 124

William Whiteley was the founder of the great Bayswater department store that bears his name. Known as the 'Universal Provider', he attributed much of his success to his claim to be able to supply anything from an elephant to a pin. At the age of seventeen, Whiteley travelled from his native Wakefield to visit the Great Exhibition of 1851, and suitably inspired by the contemporary spirit of the enterprise, he embarked single-mindedly on a path to success in his chosen field - via apprenticeship at a draper's shop in his home town, service behind the counter, and buying for several London stores and warehouses. By dint of, amongst other things, hard work and expertise, Whiteley Store, founded in 1863, was expanding fast by 1867, and its growing success in the future assured.

An extremely wealthy man, Whiteley differed from contemporary self-made men and philanthropists who made gestures during their lifetimes. Instead Whiteley made provision for £1 million in his will for the establishment of a village for retired members of the commercial and agricultural trade. The vast bequest became available sooner than could have been contemplated on account of the bizarre circumstances surrounding Whiteley's death. In 1907 he was murdered by a man claiming to be his illegitimate son, and seeking a share in the fortune.

The idea of such a bequest was not entirely novel, even in this village form. Almshouses, built on a domestic rather than an institutional scale, are a common feature of northern European architecture, and in the late nineteenth century, the long, low buildings, typical of accommodation for the old, were often split down into cottage units. Early European precedents were attracting some attention at the turn of the century, logically so, at a time when the climate of interest in matters of small domestic architecture

and town planning was so manifest, in societies such as the Garden City Association.¹²⁵ This interest was to continue into the 1920s. The Béguinage at Bruges, for example, dating from the thirteenth century was the subject of an article by Howard Robertson in the Architectural Review in 1922.¹²⁶

By the turn of the century, the smaller cottage units of the type used by George and his contemporaries were deemed desirable by many, not only for private enterprise, but also for local authority work. In addition, cottages were felt to dispel the impression of institutional life, and obviously, single-storey buildings were practical for those unable to negotiate long passages, or flights of stairs. The Mill Hill Homes for Linen and Woollen Drapers, were founded by James Marshall (of Marshall and Snellgrove), along these lines, with housing arranged around pleasant gardens, and a large central building providing the essential services. Another such community was built for the employees of the furniture trades at Radlett, in fact the village was increasingly employed as the form for institutions, examples ranging from Dr Barnardo's Home at Ilford, Essex, to the Home for Inebriate Women, Duxhurst, Surrey.¹²⁷

After Whiteley's death, the Trustees of the Bequest were faced with the considerable problem as to what sort of village and accommodation should be provided for five hundred old people. No exact precedent existed to guide them, there had been earlier villages, but not exclusively for old people. For example Hampstead Garden Suburb had provided accommodation for old people in The Orchard (1909), by Parker and Unwin, and for working women at Waterlow Court, Heath Close, by Baillie Scott (1908-09). The Trustees, headed by the Bishop of London, bought, in 1911, a two hundred and thirty acre site lying on a belt of light and dry sandy soil,¹²⁸ in the midst of Surrey pine woods, some two miles from Walton-on-Thames; such an environment, it was hoped, would be healthy even when developed to a maximum.

Walter Cave was appointed consultant architect, and instigated a competition for the plan in October 1911, limited to six architects. The most successful plan suited to the specific needs and unusual limitations imposed by the scheme, was by Frank Atkinson (1869-1923), a distinguished practitioner of the Wren-influenced variety of

Edwardian Baroque, and ardent disciple of Norman Shaw. Atkinson was appropriately the author of a number of shop building designs; Fitzroy Street, Cambridge (1904), Waring and Gillow Department Store, 164-188 Oxford Street, London (1906), and consultant (with architects Francis Swales, Daniel Burnham and J.J. Burnet), of the *bête noire* of the modernists, the monolithic monument to commercial enterprise, Selfridge's (1907-09).

Atkinson's design for Whiteley Village was of a very formal layout, a central open space with statue of the founder by Sir George Frampton, surrounded by rhododendrons and trees. The site retained its natural vegetation as far as possible, and the central space was surrounded by housing (largely cottages, completed c.1921), and around that, an outer road forming an octagon, again flanked by housing, and bisected by four roads.¹²⁹ From the central memorial, two axial avenues lead to the principal gates of the estate, while two more give vistas through the surrounding pine belt. The plan was entirely symmetrical (and not unlike the diagrams for a garden city by Ebenezer Howard, 1898), but here the logic was that the housing should be equidistant from the communal buildings and other facilities, most of which were central.

The eight cottage sections of the octagon and communal buildings were designed by a group of seven architects, a representative selection of the leading Establishment figures. In addition to Atkinson and Cave, Sir Reginald Blomfield, Ernest Newton, Mervyn Macartney, Sir Aston Webb, and George.

Having settled on a plan, a model cottage was built by Walter Cave, in order to determine the type of accommodation required by each old person, the problem being to provide enough for comfort, but to lessen the burden of cleaning, and, above all, to keep building costs reasonable. With the experience of this model before them the Trustees decided upon the following standard accommodation for each person,

'A kitchen-sitting room, with recessed and naturally-lit sleeping apartment, bath-scellery, WC and accommodation for fuel and refuse'. 130

The double cottages for married couples were simply larger.

Although the original idea was to house eight hundred,¹³¹ two hundred and forty cottages were built, and a further twenty have been added since. Clearly, with so many architects involved, the question of achieving, as much as possible, a homeliness combined with orderliness and homogeneity of design, was difficult. Monotony and an institutional atmosphere would have been intolerable on such a scale, and would have militated against the aims of the village. It was hoped that such homogeneity might have been achieved by instructing all the architects to use the same materials, chiefly a two inch red brick, and red tiles. They were allowed, however, to design their own elevations and groupings of blocks within the overall plan.¹³²

Cave's 'model cottage', was ironically deemed too expensive, and the simple, well-detailed housing designed by the various architects, was far superior to the rather ugly pebble-dashed bungalow. The architects varied the basic design with ornament in the admissible red brick, tile and stone, by introducing gables, by using different patterns of glazing, and by varying the design of the roof lines and tall chimneys. Whiteley village presents a spectrum of the best contemporary domestic architecture, principally by Establishment figures. The range of style is bettered by that of Hampstead Garden Suburb (1905-) but the latter suffered from a history of conflicting intentions, and so Whiteley is a far more complete creation, with its Renaissance plan and red brick - though it has to be admitted, somewhat banal and institutional.

Gillian Darley points out,

'The planning of Whiteley village coincided with Parliamentary action for Old Age Pensions, introduced by Asquith at this period and thus with the demise of almshouse building, giving way to time in which, in principle at least, the old were given financial security and needed no longer to depend on the munificence of philanthropists. Yet Whiteley still has a sizeable waiting list'. 133

(Pl.340)

George's contribution constituted cottages in Heather Walk, where he used three groups of two cottages to form three sides of an open court, the latter an arrangement he had favoured at Guildford, Chislehurst, Leigh and Buscot. The style is simple and reticent, with steeply pitched, hipped roofs and plain casement windows. The only decorative features being alternately recessed and projecting courses of bricks standing proud of the round-arched porchways and forming quoins at the corners of the blocks. The curved gables in the centre were repeated to form terminating walls at either end. Although in a much simplified version, George managed to introduce his generous chimney stacks reminiscent of those used with inglenooks in country house commissions. The Dutch gables, although delightfully simple, also evoke earlier work of the 1880s.

George also designed the Hornbeam Walk segment, where a simple, but well judged style was adopted once more. Two groups of two-storeyed, double cottages, were designed by George, between North Avenue and Hornbeam Walk, on Circle Road. Here, George used ornamental brick and stone together, the centre of the facade stands proud of flanking porches, and is surmounted by a segmental gable. The top of the central pane of the upper-storey windows was carved, and finished with a stone keystone, stone also being used to alternate with four courses of brick, on the corners of the bay, and first floor level corners of the house. Stone was also employed for the impost of the arches of the ground floor porches. These have round-headed arches set within a rectangular brick surround, and are more elaborate than all the brick arches over the first floor porches, which are less noticeable, being placed at the side of the building. Two of these two-storey blocks are linked by a brick wall, pierced by three round arches with stone trim and cappings, and decorated with stone urns, adding a note of monumentality to the 'Wrenaissance' style houses. George played no part in the design of communal village buildings and facilities.

The village appears to have been well received by critics, Maurice E. Webb in the Architectural Review mentioned,

'I could wish, from an architectural point of view, that the trustees had laid down one further requirement and grouped all the two-storey cottages around the centre space facing the memorial, for in a large space of this kind (550ft in diameter) single-storey buildings are lost, and the centre point of the village loses something to which it might have attained; but, apart from that one little grumble, I think it will be obvious that

homogeneity without monotony has resulted from these wise restrictions, and that a feeling of peace - which was the root of Mr Whiteley's idea- has in consequence descended upon the village.' 134

The first cottage was ready for habitation in 1917, World War I having interrupted progress on the scheme. In 1921 a group of members of the RIBA toured the village and Martin S. Briggs, briefly a junior assistant with George in 1904, commented wistfully,

'Those of us who for two years have been struggling with the cheese-paring details of modern housing schemes felt a real pleasure in seeing this example of 'pre-war' building, where genuine architectural materials have been properly used without any regard to expense'. 135

Whiteley is a splendid pre-war example of the satisfactory integration of architectural form and specialised function. The needs of the inhabitants were considered by the Trustees to be of primary importance and the restrictions imposed, tested the ingenuity of the architects, but their work ensured that the dictates of aesthetics, though to a certain extent, secondary, were not neglected. The continuing success of Whiteley is shared by some of the early London County Council cottage estates, a distinction conferred rather by their lack of ostentation than by their pretensions.

London Work

George and Peto had enjoyed considerable success in the design and interior decoration of London town houses (see Chapter 4); this was to be continued by George and Yeates. In 1897 they redecorated rooms at 49 Prince s Gate, Kensington for Mrs Vernon J. Watney, for whose husband George and Peto had undertaken alterations at 11 Berkeley Square in 1891. The house enjoyed considerable celebrity, having been owned by Frederick Richards Leyland (1831-92), who had engaged Thomas Jekyll, in 1876, to design the 'Peacock Room', painted by Whistler¹³⁶ and Shaw, first in 1879-80, to convert and redecorate the first floor drawing rooms, and again in 1885 to redecorate the morning room.¹³⁷ George and Yeates appear to have redecorated the hall, music and dining rooms. They applied to the London County Council to make additions, 'partly three-storeys and partly one-storey high on the north side of 49 Prince s Gate to abut upon Prince s Gardens',¹³⁸ this was agreed, providing that 'no portion of the proposed addition or of the entrance steps

to the same do project in advance of the outside of the kerb to the area railings etc'¹³⁹ suggesting that the work involved some structural alterations.

Their drawing of the Music room showed a range of arcaded windows, providing a deep sill for palms. All the woodwork was walnut. The dining room had oak panelling, with fine, old leather on the walls, and a richly carved overmantel.^(Pl.342) The hall, apparently the most important of George and Yeates's introductions to the house, was not illustrated,¹⁴⁰ but was described as having flatly carved stone pilasters and intarsia doors.¹⁴¹ John Belcher was later to work on the house.

Also dating from 1897-98, were George and Yeates's designs for interior schemes at Claridge's Hotel, Mayfair, London. While the history of the hotel had been well documented,¹⁴² those parts of the interior decoration assigned to George and Yeates warrant examination in the context of their other interior schemes. By the time Claridge's was rebuilt in 1894-98, by C.W.Stephens, to replace the original assemblage of Early Georgian houses,

'Public life was more relaxed, 'eating out' was increasingly common for both sexes, and the wider distribution of affluence brought more visitors to London with a variety of different purposes. The result was the appearance in the West End of grand hotels on the Parisian or American model like the Savoy, still discreet in some respects, yet not averse to advertisement with some facilities open to the general public'.¹⁴³

The owners of Claridge's, the Savoy Hotel Company responded by inviting George and Yeates to design public apartments on the ground floor. In engaging the firm they could be guaranteed schemes to rival reception rooms in contemporary country houses, which was just the ambience which was required, affluent, relaxed and comfortable. As in a country house, the gentlemen could retire to the timber-beamed smoking room,^(Pl.343) with its lofty stone chimney-piece, half panelled walls and elaborate light fixture, and to the billiard room, with its ornate freize. Both schemes represented George's flamboyant Flemish style of the 1880s. The ladies were provided with a reading and drawing room, with its deep white ceiling and fireplace creating a fresh, airy atmosphere. The 'coffee room' with dining room behind, and common to all guests and visitors, was panelled, with a deep, richly decorated ceiling of characteristically flattened arches.^(Pl.343) In 1901, Arild Rosenkrantz executed the ceiling

decorations for the twelve bays into which the large dining hall was divided. He illustrated various gods of ancient mythology who preside over the animal and vegetable world. The work took eighteen months, and contained upwards of one hundred life-size figures. The principal staircase by George and Yeates was less effective in design, with a wrought-iron balustrade and occasional beaten panels. By the 1920s George's public rooms were redecorated by Basil Ionides, to accord with changing tastes.

George and Yeates were to continue to make additions to alter and redecorate London town houses until the First World War (see Catalogue). 11 Charles Street, Mayfair, for society hostess, the Hon. Mrs Greville, while perhaps representing an extreme in opulence, nevertheless serves as an example of this kind of house which George and Yeates were often to encounter. Originally by Wimperis and Arber (1891), the house appears to have been remodelled by George and Yeates in 1898.¹⁴⁴ Mrs Greville was the daughter of millionaire Edinburgh brewer, philanthropist, MP and Privy Councillor, William McEwan. She married Captain The Hon. Ronald Greville, eldest son of Lord Greville and a long standing friend of George Keppel. Through the Keppels, Mrs Greville gained entrée to the smart set, entertaining prime ministers, cabinet ministers, ambassadors, heads of state and several generations of the British Royal family. The plan reveals¹⁴⁵ arrangements well suited to the demands of the fashionable rich, and was described by G.A.T. Middleton, as a house

'obviously intended to a large extent to be used for reception purposes, for which it is admirably suited... There is no attempt to obtain cosy nooks or recesses, but a grander architectural effect is aimed at than these can provide'. 146

The entire basement was given over to the servants and kitchen area: the butler had his working day headquarters in the pantry, with a separate bedroom near the deed storage room and the wine cellars. The housekeeper too, was furnished with a room for day use and sleeping. At the rear of the basement, the servants' hall and maids' sitting room occupy one side of the corridor - the larder, household store, scullery and kitchen (under the stables) the other. From still room and close to the butler's pantry, servants lifts took household linen, and the meals, up to a servery positioned near to the dining room on the ground floor. The distance from the kitchen to serving lift was of unfortunate length - food had to be carried or brought on a trolley about a hundred feet along the basement corridor.

The ground and first floors provided dayrooms for the owners. Entering the front door, a generous entrance hall with fireplace opened into a staircase hall. From that central point, doors opened into the dining room and library; a corridor led to the cloakroom and a large morning room, overlooking a small garden; and a staircase led up to Mrs Greville's boudoir and two drawing rooms on the first floor. The serving lift reached this floor as well, and a secondary staircase ran up to the Greville's bedrooms, as well as to maids' rooms on the upper storeys.

In 1906, the Grevilles bought Polesden Lacey, Surrey, which had been remodelled by Sir Ambrose Poynter for Sir Clinton Dawkins in 1902-05, and employed Mewes and Davis to completely redecorate the house in 1906. It is reported that fresh fruit, flowers and vegetables were sent daily from Polesden to Charles Street during the season.

Building in the fashionable areas of London was to slow down after the return of the Liberal Government in 1906, but many of the small Georgian houses in Mayfair were demolished and rebuilt in Edwardian splendour c.1911-13. In 1913 George and Yeates returned to work on the Westminster Estate, where the second Duke of Westminster had begun to rebuild about a third of Upper Brook Street. Much of the work took place between 1905-15, when fourteen houses were rebuilt. All the houses were stone fronted, except number 54, by George and Yeates for Sir Robert Burnet (for whom they had designed Greycroft, Berkshire in 1905). Six houses (numbers 1, 2, 16, 17, 18 and 39), were built by Edward Wimperis who became the estate surveyor in 1910. After the war he built numbers 9 and 10, and three blocks of flats. Indeed,

'Upper Brook Street is still dominated by Wimperis's opulent manner, ranging from pre-war Tudor of no 1, and the Beaux-Arts of no 2, to the interwar red brick and stone neo-Georgian of nos 9 and 10, or the chunky blocks of flats at Upper Fielde and Upper Brook Fielde'. 147

Numbers 54-56 were demolished in c.1957 for the rebuilding of the flank of the United States Embassy in Grosvenor Square. George's design for number 54 is of great interest, being arguably the last example of George's individual town house architecture. The choice of two tones of brick, instead of stone, was unusual at this date in Upper Brook Street, and perhaps allows for a loosely Flemish flavour. The front displayed tiers of transomed and leaded windows, in wooden frames, fixed flush with the brickwork. There was a thin stone porch, an iron first floor balcony and

high pitched pediment to the gable, enriched with large scale egg and dart. The return elevation to Blackburne's Mews was less formal, but judiciously composed, the corner being marked by stone quoins. The design is restrained, in keeping with pre-war taste, but interestingly still owed much to the Low Countries for inspiration, and therefore forms an elliptical postscript to George's long and successful career in town architecture.

Further Commissions Abroad

First hand knowledge, acquired through extensive travel, enabled George to respond sensitively to foreign climates and conditions. In 1908, George and Yeates were

'asked to advise as to the arrangements of a school for higher education of Greek girls, much upon the lines of the English public schools, where physical as well as mental development is studied'. 148

The stucco-faced building with its square turrets, was in an Italianate style. ^(Pl. 345) This was highly appropriate since the clarity of a classical plan allowed for efficient circulation, and the wide eaves, flatly-pitched, Roman-tiled roofs and arcaded courtyard were both handsome and practical in a hot climate. The general composition and picturesque detailing while unmistakable, showed George to be sensitive to location.

Similarly, the large, teak-framed Lumber House, in British Guiana (1912), for Messrs Darson, was built using local methods; arcaded brick piers raising it above the rather swampy soil. ^(Pl. 346) The weatherboarding was of local mahogany. The picturesque verandah, and boarded walls at first floor level, smaller second storey with shuttered windows and the centre section of the house running into a quasi-tower with four-sided pitched roof and almost Oriental turret, were organised into a strong, somewhat stocky composition, which The Builder justifiably felt, would have gained 'aesthetically and practically by immensely wider eaves'. 149

After the war, in 1919, George and Yeates produced what was to be one of their last joint designs, a bungalow in Nairobi, in local stone, with a roof of wood shingle spreading over the wide verandah. ^(Pl. 347) All the woodwork was teak and the work once again acknowledged indigenous requirements. Italian craftsmen undertook most of the constructive work in this equatorial hill country.

By far the most important commission, not least because of its size and because it was in India, where Baker and Lutyens, both products of the Maddox Street office, were establishing reputations, was the Shirpur Palace for H.H. The Maharajah Holkar of Indore, designed in 1914. (Pl. 348)

After being defeated by the British at the Battle of Mahidpur in 1817, Malhar Rao Holkar II (1811-33), was forced to make peace by the Treaty of Mandasor (1818), by which he agreed to maintain a subsidiary force within his territories, to accept a permanent British Resident at his capital, Indore, to give up all claims on the Rajput states, and to cede to the English all his territories south of the Narmada. Thus the Holkars became subsidiary princes without any trace of independence, but remained friendly to the British and protected their families during the Indian Mutiny. This perhaps accounts for the unmistakably English character of the design provided by George and Yeates. The later Holkars who ruled at Indore were generally immersed in personal pleasures and cared little for the welfare of the people - this perhaps accounts for the scale of the Palace.

The dignified Old Palace, with its graceful Audience Hall is half hidden behind rows of bangle sellers on the main square of the city. ¹⁵⁰ George and Yeates's new Palace stands across the square, itself on a site intended for an earlier palace, schemed originally C.1885 and partly begun. George produced a spirited Renaissance design, with arcaded verandahs and familiar high-pedimented pavilions. The plan indicated the extent and complexity of this prestigious commission. It was proposed to roof in the existing portion as a ground floor building, seen to the right of the RA drawing. As well as providing reception and guest rooms, this formed an approach to the Durbar Hall with its lofty proportions, 100' x 50', with additional space under the arcades. The domestic rooms formed wings on either side of the hall, one provided for the zenana and nurseries and each with an open courtyard. All these rooms opened into wide corridors on either side, doors and windows providing shade or sunlight as desired, or as the prevailing wind necessitated. The flat roof of the lower building could be approached from the upper floors of the main palace and used as a terrace or garden. The neighbourhood apparently provided good building stone and white marble could also be obtained locally.

The following year, 1915, George exhibited a watercolour of one of the Courts at the RA, showing its double arcade, centre fountain and minaret-like turret in one corner. Much admired for the setting of the domed subject in a quiet light against a pale blue sky - it was in strong contrast to 'the violent drawing exhibited in this same gallery with strong ultramarine blue skies and other chic expedients'. ¹⁵¹

Also shown at the RA in 1915, were three designs, executed in sepia wash, for houses for the Maharajah's Aides-de-Camp. ^(Pl. 349) Built generally from brick or rubble, with plastered facing, the arcades and details were of stone, the floors of paving on brick arches between joists. All three designs were quite European in style, but with wide spreading eaves shading attic windows below. They were variously organised around courtyards. A far cry from the splendour and complexity of the Palace, these simple houses endorse the fact that George was arguably most successful designing on a smaller scale. The simple treatment received both his command of massing and compositional ability.

The Holkars continued to rule Indore until the merger of the state with the Republic of India in 1948. ¹⁵²

West Dean Park, Sussex(1891-93 and 1905)

Work at West Dean Park, Singleton, Sussex was to span the period of transition between George's partnerships with Harold Peto and Alfred Yeates.

Purchased in 1891, at a cost of £200,000, by William Dodge James (1854-1912), shortly after his marriage in 1889, the 9,000 acre estate near Chichester was considered to be one of the most desirable in the area. By 1907 T.H.S.Escott considered West Dean Park to have been 'socially so characteristic of the Edwardian age that it might have seemed the sudden growth of a single season'.¹ Indeed the position which the James's held within Society accounts for much of the tone of the work that they commissioned.

The visits of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, to West Dean Park attracted considerable attention to the house. They also indicated the important changes which had taken place in society.² The James's themselves perfectly epitomised the mood of the time, and of all the hosts who entertained Edward VII, James was 'not only the most favoured but the most typical'.³

They were a romantic couple; he a traveller and big game hunter, immeasurably wealthy, being the heir to two American fortunes derived from railways and metal broking; she, a petite, clever and witty woman, an amateur actress and altogether captivating socialite. Of particular significance, however, was the fact that they were untitled. London Opinion was to comment,

'Mrs Willie James is a niece of Georgina, Countess of Dudley and is well known for her wit, beauty and hospitality. She is the only untitled hostess who the Queen, who has known her from childhood, has ever honoured with a long country house visit'.⁴

Queen Alexandra, who delighted in Evelyn James's 'merry sallies and bright looks'⁵ had stayed at West Dean in 1896, as Princess of Wales, the first time that she had stayed in the house of a commoner.

Evelyn James, eldest daughter of Helen, Lady Forbes and Sir Charles Forbes, the 4th Bt of Newe, Aberdeenshire, was from distinguished Scottish ancestry on both sides. Her grandfather had known Queen Victoria, her father had been one of the old King's most intimate friends and she herself had been a close neighbour of the future King and Queen on Deeside. But, as the World magazine was at pains to point out, her

background was not the key to her success. She had, 'reached the zenith of every smart woman's ambition',⁶ rather because, 'the Princess of Wales has a warm liking for her ... In a word Mrs James fulfils the conditions of her time - she is amusing'.⁷

The Prince and Princess of Wales gave Evelyn James a sapphire and diamond brooch for a wedding present and it seems certain that, as a future member of the Royal social circle, William James would have harboured hopes of entertaining Royalty as house guests. The West Dean estate had been chosen because it had much to recommend it to those interested in Edwardian leisure pursuits. It was close to Cowes, home of the Royal Yacht Squadron, and to the racecourse at Goodwood, furthermore the covert shooting was authoratively considered to be the best in England. These were attractions guaranteed to appeal to the Prince of Wales, who had tastes running ahead of his income, which accounted for his surrounding himself with a mixed group of friends. It is in the context of such social aspirations that the massive programme of replanning, re-equipping, remodelling and redecoration entrusted to George and Peto by William James in 1891, must be placed.

(P1.350)

The 'limp Gothick house'⁸ was not new. It had been built originally for James, Lord Selsey and was hopefully described at the time of 'Willie' James's purchase as

'exhibiting a front which carries from its magnitude an air of grandeur and from the variety of its forms an appropriate and picturesque effect'.⁹

Some 300' long, it was low-lying and in the castle style, entirely faced in knapped flint, with an ecclesiastical window over the porch. Internally, the house was in need of modernization and refurbishment.

No documentation survives indicating any precise reason why, over and above their professional standing, George and Peto were commissioned.

Externally, George and Peto raised the low, long wing lying to the east, constructed a new service court, and added a wing of bachelor bedrooms.^(P1.351) However, the major work of remodelling was effected inside and resulted in the transformation of a house full of long, dark passageways and

comparatively small rooms, into a sumptuous interior; a perfect backcloth for the social activities James envisaged.

A new, square hall was created in the centre of the house, by knocking two existing rooms into one, and removing the ceiling so that it went up through two storeys. Next to it, a new staircase was put in, with solid oak treads, the subject of much admiration. A billiard room with a top-lit table, raised dais, arcade and seats was added next to the smoking room which had been created from the old billiard room. The two were connected by an oak arcade. The walls of both the smoking and billiard rooms were hung with Tyneside wall-hangings. (P1.352)

At the same time, the old principal rooms on the south front were preserved, but embellished and redecorated. Of the four, first came the dining room, followed by the morning room, library and drawing room which were made to open into one another to form an enfilade, which had obvious advantages for entertaining. New, massive oak entrance doors were fixed to the south porch, opening into the entrance hall, where George formed a new window on the west side, thus considerably improving the defective lighting. The old stone steps and arches were removed and new marble stairs, side linings, balustrade and hand rail were substituted, all supplied by Farmer and Brindley.¹⁰ All the damask lining and much of the panelling was renewed and Old Masters, mostly Flemish and Dutch, including works by Cuyp, Rembrandt, Ruysdael and Steen, were bought in London salerooms to hang on the walls, doubtless on the advice of the architects.

A Ham Hill stone arch led from the entrance hall into the main oak hall. (P1.353) The latter, measuring some 30'6" x 34' x 22', with oak panelled ceiling, oak floor and dado, prompted Gleeson White to remark in The Studio, that for West Dean's 'progenitors one had not to turn to old France, nor to Lombardy, but to England, and to 'Merrie England' at that'.¹¹ Merrie England would seem to have been, at first sight, strangely old fashioned for the 1890s, but the hall represented a more advanced form than The Studio implied. (P1.354) It was not akin to the great halls of the mid century, and furthermore, with its square proportions it differed from George's more rectangular halls at Rousdon, Stoodleigh, Batsford and Shiplake. It marked the final stage in George's development of the form. While often far from cosy and intimate, George's halls

had never been coldly impersonal. At Woolpits an inglenook and staircase together with a single storey hall, had created quite a cosy space, even at the large Batsford, the Ballroom had an inglenook. However at Shiplake George designed the hall as a Saloon, clearly intended to act as a living hall since it displaced the drawing room. Contemporary photographs showed the hall at West Dean as a comfortably furnished area, overlooked by the oak balustraded bedroom corridor - a move towards the more open and relaxed living halls of the turn of the century. ^(Pl.355) The tenor was one of a perfect balance between the impressive, the intimate and the comfortable, and was achieved by careful consideration. The height, 22', was emphasised by the impressive floor to ceiling carved Ham Hill stone fireplace to the east, the floor to ceiling bay window to the north, and the principal staircase and tapestry gallery to the west. The minstrel gallery recalled George's earlier work. The modern minstrels were Cassano's orchestra, which was hired from London for big house parties. A contemporary account remarked 'the hall, one of the finest apartments and most comfortable of lounges, is perhaps the feature of the house'. ¹²

Lutyens remarked of the interior,

'very smart and luxurious and lots of beautiful things - and a ping pong table etc etc. No untoward evidences of Royal favours by way of photos'. ¹³

This opulent, easy and discreet ambience was clearly achieved only by an enormous expenditure of money, as an examination of the remodelling and redecoration of the principal rooms reveals.

^(Pl.356) The staircase rose from the hall and was top-lit by a ceiling light, glazed with amber coloured glass, creating a warm light. Walter Smith, whom George and Peto had employed in the 1880s at Pinner, Uplyme and Westgate, was responsible for the rich carving of the plaster panelled cove. The ceiling of the old tapestry gallery was replaced, with a new panelled, moulded and carved version which was three feet higher. A new oak-panelled dado, carved pilasters and overdoors were added and the walls above were hung with blue tapestry cloth. Magnificent tapestries, some measuring 25' x 13', from the Hamilton Palace Sale Collection and doubtless acquired by George and Peto, must have spared any impersonality.

The idiom of the redecoration strongly suggests that Peto would have had the upper hand. The style of dining room was Italian, ^(Pl.357) the sixteenth

century portraits around the freize coming from an old palace in Milan. A handsome carved sideboard in Italian walnut was fitted, with dado, doors and overdoors, curtain boxes and pilasters to match, also a carved Istrian stone chimney piece with Hopton Wood stone hood and Spanish tiled back and open hearth. The room was thus redecorated in order that it might continue to house portraits by Lely.¹⁴ The morning room, fitted with carved overdoors finished in ivory white had handsome mahogany doors, carved marble chimney piece and an unusual hob grate, created a light, airy atmosphere. The drawing room was more or less in Louis XVI style, again suggesting the hand of Peto. The woodwork was finished in white and gold and a white marble chimney piece surrounded a deeply recessed open fireplace. Objects from the collections of the late Lord Clifton and Mr Cavendish-Bentinck added much to the rich ambience. New panelled, moulded and enriched plaster ceilings were put in the dining, morning and drawing rooms, the walls of which were hung with red, green and blue silk respectively.

Upstairs the principal bedrooms were redecorated, refitted and hung with silk and other hangings, while all the domestic apartments and minor bedrooms were overhauled and refitted and painted and distempered by the estate workmen.

Messrs Mellier and Co. of Margaret Street, London, were the decorators and suppliers of furnishings, including the woodwork to the dining, morning, drawing and smoking rooms, and the tapestry gallery. Despite its name, the Company appears to have no French connections, appearing in the London Trade Directories in the mid 1860s. They were not only decorators, in the sense that they could make and install wall hangings, curtains, drapes, ceilings, mouldings and door surrounds, but they also employed craftsmen to make the furniture, always of the highest quality. Mellier and Co. were later to decorate George and Yeates's British Pavilion, for the St Louis Exhibition in 1904.

The scale of the internal and aesthetic improvements at West Dean, was matched only by the provision of every form of sophisticated modern technology, creating what The Onlooker described a 'a model of comfort and luxury'.¹⁵ This was in marked contrast to the faded gentility of some more ancient seats. The guesting sybarites, headed by the Prince of Wales, could not have failed to have been impressed.

The installation of a highly sophisticated system of electric light,

by Messrs Edmundson was most impressive. The house was lit by means of incandescent lights - or 'burners', of which there were some three hundred and sixty-four, and sixteen candle filaments, while a further forty lit the stables and engine rooms. The most impressive feature was the 'electrofier' in the hall, which carried eighteen lights. (Pl. 355) Switches for this, and the five, six-burner pendant lights in the tapestry gallery and entrance hall, were arranged in convenient places to enable the lights to be controlled as required. Bedrooms were provided with shaded pendants over the toilette table and small lamps on either side of the toilette mirrors. Bedside lights could be turned up at any moment during the night. The current required for this technical wizardry was supplied by two single cylinder steam engines, giving up to 21 brake horsepower at 170 revolutions per minute, with 100 lbs steam pressure. Sightfeed lubricators, fitted to the steam pipe and lubricating arrangements were such that they enabled the engines to run for any length of time without stopping. Such was the level of sophistication, an additional engine and dynamo was provided, in the event of extra power being required. Three batteries would have been sufficient to store the necessary current, but to avoid the necessity of running on Sundays - out of consideration for the boilerman - two secondary batteries were installed, each capable of supplying about ninety lights for eight or ten hours, or a larger number of lights for a shorter period. This equipment was housed in an engine house behind the stables, well concealed by trees.

The house was heated with hot water coils in wrought iron cases with wrought iron cases with green marble tops and by conveniently placed radiators. A boiler house contained two Cornish mild steel boilers capable of working up to 190 lbs pressure per square inch. Water was first forced through a feed heater which raised the temperature to 200°F and removed impurities before the water entered the boiler. W. Gould of Paddington, a favourite sub-contractor of George, fitted the equipment. A coal bunker capable of holding nearly thirty tons was placed next to the boiler house to ensure the desired level of heat was maintained.

Other arrangements further ensured the smooth running of the household, so necessary when entertaining Royalty. The provision of a servery underneath the east end of the tapestry gallery with a

passageway leading to a serving hatch in the kitchen, together with the installation of a hydraulic dinner lift, fixed by the American Elevator Co., enabled food to be taken from the kitchen to the dining room, without crossing the hall. The automated steam laundry was supplied with drying closet, mangle, washer and wringers etc. by Bradford and Co. and all were driven by a two and a half horsepower electric motor.

Fire-extinguishing equipment was also installed, a reservoir to hold fifty-two thousand gallons was constructed at a height of 150' on the hill behind the house, overlooking the park. Capable of discharging fifteen hundred gallons an hour, water being pumped up from a well at the house, driven by electricity, through to hydrants in and around the house and stables, with standpipes, hose and buckets. The equipment had an early début in 1899 when the house caught fire and the reservoir proved invaluable in bringing the fire under control, especially in view of the fact that the Chichester Fire Brigade were reported to have arrived on the scene three hours after the alarm had been raised.

George and Peto employed many of their favourite craftsmen and subcontractors at West Dean, including Walter Smith who carved the plasterwork and Starkie Gardner who executed the wrought iron work and door furniture. Messrs J. Simpson and Son of Paddington, were responsible for the structural alterations, Messrs Best and Son of Victoria Street, London, were in charge of all sanitary work.

To complete the remodelling, part of the grounds were redesigned to create a new carriage drive to the front of the house, with large forecourt and sunken flower beds. The work was carried out by Mr Milner from London.

It might well have been the damage caused by the fire in 1899, which prompted Willie James to turn his attention once again to the fabric of the house, in 1902. Fire broke out in a dressing room above Mrs James's boudoir at the west end of the house and spread up to the roof, gutting four bedrooms en route and damaging the boudoir beneath. It also damaged the west staircase and while sparing the billiard room, great hall and other parts of the house, it extended along the roof, damaging the oak staircase, strewing debris throughout the house.

After the 1891-93 alterations by George and Peto, the two rooms at the south-west corner of the house, namely the drawing room with its

fan-vaulted ceiling and the library, were joined by double doors, an arrangement which had survived from the Regency house. In 1902 Mellier and Co. opened the two rooms into one, marking the division by a pair of Corinthian columns and pushed out a bay the west side of the room, thus creating a more characteristically Edwardian space, convenient for house parties. The panelled and enriched woodwork was perhaps overplayed by the firm who were unable to resist extra gilt on the columns, creating a richer and more frivolous version of the real thing. The character of the 1902 decoration suggests that Harold Peto might have been consulted.

Taste had changed by the early 1900s. Lutyens was said to have found the over furnishing of the oak hall particularly alarming. It was to George's pupil, with his more spartan taste, that James turned for the design of Monkton, a more modest retreat in a remote corner of the West Dean Estate, higher up in the foothills of the Downs, with views over Chichester and the Channel. Lutyens's rather homely exercise intended partly as a summer retreat, was an antidote to the continuing opulence of West Dean.¹⁶ Its open balconies and loggia for dining outside, reflected changing attitudes.¹⁷ On his last site visit to Monkton in 1904, Lutyens spent a couple of hours before his train came, helping Mrs James to rearrange West Dean for the annual Goodwood house party. With the help of three servants, he carried out the stuffed polar bear which held a lamp in one paw, and a tray for visiting cards in the other; a sedan chair, two screens and various other pieces of furniture and still found the house overfull.

Nevertheless it was to George and Yeates, that James returned in 1905 for the addition of a porte-cochère and tower on the south facade, to replace the old Gothic-style porch. A more prestigious affair, it was in keeping with the square pavilions at either end of the house. It is (Pl. 358) described by Pevsner as 'a big porte-cochère, with tower on top of it in Arts and Crafts Gothick, just like an advanced methodist church'.¹⁸ George and Yeates's polite employment of knapped flint and stone, admired by the Building News,¹⁹ ensured no discordance with the existing façade. The plans²⁰ (Pls, 359, 360, 361 & 362) reveal, 'the window over present entrance door to be retained but with new head' (on south elevation), 'existing double mouldings in flint retained so contained over heads in new window'.²¹ The flint mouldings round the second floor windows (lowest: east), were to

be retained 'as much as possible', and 'the footings of the new tower buttresses to be carried down to the depth of present foundations'.²²

While George is last recorded in the visitors book in 1905, when he was presumably monitoring the progress of the additions, Harold Peto, himself a great admirer of Edward VII,²³ is recorded as visiting annually from 1905-09 and again in 1911. It is probably during this period that Peto was asked to lay out a section of the garden. There had been gardens at West Dean, certainly since the sixteenth century, when the original Manor House was built by James Lewkneor in the reign of James I. Trees and shrubs had always been a feature of the garden, which now takes the form of a large, informal parklike garden in the late nineteenth century arboretum style. In 1836, J.C.Loudon measured some remarkable and rare species for inclusion in his mammoth, Arboretum et Fructicetum Britannicum. William James continued planting, some ceremonies being undertaken by Edward VII, including that, in 1905, when the Blue Cedar, *Cedrus Atlantica Glauca*, was planted on the west lawn near the big Horse Chestnut, together with some of the cedars by the approach to the drive.

In addition to the general effects of planting, some notable architectural features were introduced, namely the sunken garden, with its three dominant Japanese maples, lying to the west of the main drive. Peto designed a pergola which rather lacked his usually light and elegant touch.^(Pl.363) Its uncharacteristically ponderous appearance was mitigated slightly by its attractive texture, created by a chequered flint and stone pattern. A path lined with fine specimen trees connects the sunken garden westwards to the pergola, and further to a neo-Gothic gazebo, with its extraordinary floor of knapped flints and horses molars; the pumice-lined bridge crossed the usually dry, bed of the River Lavant, in the wild garden, with relics of a 'grotto', the great clumps of bamboo, the scattered statuary and massed evergreens, combine to create a strong flavour characteristic of the romantic revival gardens of the turn of the century. The date of Peto's garden work is imprecise, but it is likely to have been between 1905 and 1911. Indeed, during the years before the First World War, Peto probably met many of his future landscape garden and villa clients at West Dean. These included Sir Ernest Cassel, the millionaire financier who was a frequent guest at West Dean Park and was himself a regular host to the King at his home, Moulton Paddocks, Suffolk. Harold Peto designed Cassel a villa at Cap Ferrat, France, on the fashionable Côte d'Azur.^(Pl.364) A drawing of Les Cedres, dated April 1923 is extant showing an Italianate style villa, but it is not certain

whether it was ever executed.²⁴

It is interesting in this connection that Ralph Edwards recalls Harold Peto in the 1920s in his article 'Percy Macquoid and Others',

'I have heard it told of Peto that when he had been invited as a member of a house party for what his hosts intended to be purely social week-ends, they having unwarily sought his counsel on changes in planting or lay-out, they would be taken aback on receiving an account for services rendered with his 'bread and butter letter' early in the following week. But if that were so, his hosts, hoping to get useful tips on the cheap, had perhaps no right to complain. . . Peto might be taken to represent a far rarer type (than Edward Hudson), the British aesthete - in pose, appearance and voice. Verging on old age when I met him, he had been granted plenty of time to study the part. I recall him at dinner in Dorset Square 25 with his fastidious air and mincing gait, cambric ruffles at his wrists, his manner and deportment evoking contemporary descriptions of Horace Walpole'. 26

With the King's death in 1910, an age passed away. In an article entitled, 'The Passing of the Old Favourites, Entire Remodelling of the Inner Court Circle', written after the King's death, the author predicted,

'Neither Mr Arthur James nor Mr William James are likely to be members of the new King's set . . . neither the King nor Queen have any liking for the 'smart' society, such as was to be seen at Court during the late reign, of which the leading representatives may be said to have been Mrs Willie James and Mrs George Keppel. Indeed, His Majesty prefers people of rather a more serious type about him . . . there is a probability that what has been described as 'the intellectual set', led by Mrs Asquith and Lady Lytton, will come into favour'. 27

If West Dean Park had epitomised fashionable Edwardian habits and sophisticated technology, in terms of size, it was swiftly rendered out of date. Almost symbolically the pace of life slowed up after the King's death. Mrs James began to suffer from heart trouble and William James died at a premature fifty-five in 1912, by which time the heyday of West Dean Park, so perfectly catered for by George and Peto, had passed; it was let from 1914 until 1932 although Mrs James died in 1927. The house was somewhat revitalized during the period that the James's son Edward was married to a dancer, Tilly Losch, but after the failure of their marriage, West Dean ceased to be used as a house. Monkton was later transformed for Edward James, a keen collector and later follower of the arts, by Kit Nicholson and Hugh Casson, with the help of Salvador Dali, in the 1930s. West Dean Park is now a Crafts College.

North Myrms Park, Hertfordshire (1893-98)

North Myrms Park, Hertfordshire, 'more famous for its pictures than its architecture', has been described as

'one of the best examples of the late Elizabethan style in the country, inferior perhaps to none but Hatfield'. 28

Originally a courtyard house, it was built, it is thought by Sir Ralph Coningsby, who succeeded to North Myrms in 1590. The house, known locally as 'Little Hatfield', has naturally provoked comparisons with its great neighbour, and although it might be tempting to ascribe it to Robert Cecil's architect, Robert Lyminge, this is unlikely. The house is difficult to date exactly, but since Coningsby inherited North Myrms in 1590, and died in 1615, this would seem to predate Hatfield, which was not begun until 1607, and

'there is nothing to show that Coningsby was apeing on a smaller scale the magnificences of his neighbour'. 29

The house is approximately to the north of an Elizabethan or early Jacobean country house, built in English brick with few ornamental furnishings. The two towers, with their ogee caps attached to the inner sides of the east and west wings, which might be taken as a contemporary reminiscence of Hatfield, are actually Victorian additions, and form no part of the original building.

George and Yeates's additions of 1893 onwards, were not the first nineteenth century alterations, and it is important to examine the development of the plan of the house, over the years, in order to appreciate their contribution. The house, as originally conceived, was almost perfectly symmetrical, the plan being a variant of the well established type - a main block with projecting wings which, according to their prolongation on one or both sides, gave either the E or H-shaped plan. At North Myrms, the wings achieve the greater depth on the south side, while on the north they project no more than the porch in the centre. In 1846-47 Blore executed certain alterations, namely the addition of towers and the running of two-storey corridors along the inner sides of the wings, thus considerably narrowing the courtyard. At the same time, the central portion of the south front

was brought forward to form a second hall, so that the square bays in the re-entrant angles, one of which no doubt was occupied by the staircase, lost their identity, and the main block became two rooms in depth. Further changes were to take place when George and Yeates took the building in hand in the 1890s .

Although in the interior, the house has preserved nothing of its original woodwork and decoration, the exterior remains relatively unaltered, despite an interlude during the 1920s , when the house, according to current fashions, was stuccoed or white washed, and a stuccoed parapet and pinnacled gables were added. These alterations were later rectified, and the north, east, and west fronts, appear entirely restored to their original state. On the east elevation the dormers have been renewed, and the present Jacobean doorway, in the centre, replaces an eighteenth century predecessor. Drawings from the mid-nineteenth century, show that the east side of the house, like the north front, was stuccoed or white washed, with a battlemented parapet. Fortunately, the alterations did no harm to the brickwork, which was restored to its trellis pattern of black headers, which remain undisturbed on the north and east fronts. The porch, with its characteristic fluted columns, and its attempt to reproduce a Doric frieze, is the only eighteenth/early nineteenth century ornamental feature which remains.

George and Yeates's work at North Myms was prompted by the purchase of the house by Walter H. Burns, a partner in the Morgan Bank, and Pierpont Morgan's brother-in-law,³⁰ who employed George and Yeates, in 1893, to extend the house to more than double its size. Burns commissioned the block added at the south-west corner of the original house; the layout of the gardens and their architectural features by George, and the doyen of landscape gardening of the period, William Robinson; the stables and the reconstitution of the original approach to the house, involving the provision of a new lodge, gates and a bridge; and most of the decoration of the interior. By the 1890s the house retained scarcely anything of its original woodwork, what had remained having been sold by a previous owner. Apparently, the house once possessed 'some good carving'³¹ but only a chimneypiece is ever cited, over which is a large oak panel, representing Pyramus and Thisbe, and dated 1563. As Arthur Oswald comments,

'If not introduced from elsewhere, this must have come from an earlier manor house, which probably stood on a site a little further to the north-east'. 32

While the work at North Myms was one of the first commissions undertaken with Yeates, and although it follows the style of the original building, there are, nevertheless, touches characteristic of George and Peto. By designing the new block away to the south-west, George and Yeates kept the shape of the Elizabethan house unencumbered, which was desirable, and although it covered an almost equal area, it succeeded in remaining subordinate in scale, on account of its careful positioning in relation to the remainder of the building. The walls of the existing E-shaped house were left almost intact, the new buildings leading away from the south-west angle, thus serving to lengthen the courtyard. This wing served another useful purpose in that the court had, in previous times, been misused as the approach to a modern entrance door, but George and Yeates were to restore the old position of the drive so that the house would again be entered from its original north porch, giving a new privacy to the enclosed south garden, which was treated by William Robinson, a friend of Harold Peto, in a formal manner, with walls, pavilions and gates, designed by George. The kitchen, and ill-arranged offices in the old house were therefore to make way for reception rooms, and the former, George and Yeates planned spaciouly around their own courtyard, forming the back of the new group. The east front of the new wing was occupied by the morning room, billiard room, second entrance hall, and an open, triple-arched central loggia. Internally an arcaded oak staircase led to the bedrooms above. The difficulties presented by the straggling nature of the plan were partly met by the forming of a passage, or tunnel, from the offices to the 'bachelor' wing, for the carrying of luggage, and of service generally, to this extreme end of the building. Externally, the block was typical of George, the east front showing a symmetrical elevation, with the recessed loggia in the centre, flanked by two mullioned and gabled bays. The next facade incorporated two sympathetically designed towers, serving to unite the wing visually with the old house. An additional storey for nurseries was built at the south-west corner of the court, a few years later.

Internally George and Yeates made a number of changes within the old house. They removed a wall in the north entrance hall, lengthening it westwards and thus lending to it a greater impact, as well as additional space. To effect this lengthening, they occupied an area to the west, previously occupied by the original pantry and buttery. The plaster ceilings throughout were by Walter Priestly. The kitchen and offices had previously been in the west wing, before their removal to the new building. The kitchen would have occupied the area redesigned by George as a breakfast room, with a barrel ceiling. In order to alter the purpose of the original kitchen, George built new interior walls on the old foundations, which made a more intimate and manageable space. By far the most important alteration in the main building was the formation of the great South Hall. ^(Pl.366) Running parallel to the entrance hall, it is two storeys in height, and 75' long, and is carried through to the outer walls of the east wing. The east end is occupied by an elaborate principal staircase and ample music gallery, situated behind an arcading of oak posts. The most characteristic feature introduced by George and Yeates was the monumental stone chimney-piece, employed in so many of their country houses, with its great tapering flue carried right up to the ceiling, and dramatically lit by a tall bay window opposite, another popular arrangement with the firm. The bas-relief frieze of putti, above the fireplace, was by Harry Bates. Although Bates had studied under Dalou and Rodin, in Paris, little of their influence is discernible, which perfectly accords with the atmosphere George and Yeates were aiming to achieve. The detailing in the hall added to this ambience. The hall is not unlike that at Shiplake, with a two-storey window opposite to the fireplace. The furniture, designed by George to form a seat along a pierced wood balustrade, at the foot of the principal staircase, together with the fine quality of the woodwork on the arcade above, combine with the beamed ceiling to create an impressive space, which is, at the same time, carefully articulated and lit to create a bright, comfortable area. The panelling lends a warmth to the stone work above, which augments both the traditional and comfortable aspects. The Builder, commented,

'The detail of this (fireplace and woodwork) is rather slight in comparison with the massive style of the rest of the work, and seems a little out of keeping with an otherwise effective interior'. 33

Again, in the old house, the Jacobean room was formed by George out of three smaller rooms, at the north end of the west wing. The panelling and chimney piece apparently coming from another house. The library (illustrated in the building press in 1898)³⁴, faced north-west, adjoining the Long Gallery. The design, executed by Simpsons attracted a good deal of attention in the press; George's drawing shows a very rich fireplace and chimneypiece, with quaint caryatids and cartouches, carved out of Hopton Wood stone. This is flanked by bookshelves and a richly carved cupboard, designed by George, and these, together with the woodwork of the doors, is in Italian walnut. The upper part of the walls was to have an arabesque treatment in colour.

The dining room of the new block was not designed by George, but was decorated at a rather later date, by an American, Waldo Storey, in an Italian Renaissance style, akin to that favoured by Harold Peto. It had a sumptuous marble floor and enriched ceiling, in Italian Renaissance style, and it provided a suitable setting for the display of Italian paintings, sculpture, and tapestry. Beyond the dining room, lay the new entrance hall behind the entrance loggia. George and Yeates designed the entrance/gate house which, with its two cottages forms one of the entrances to the Park, and is in keeping with the architecture of the house, having three gables and an archway in the centre. The stables, to accommodate about twenty horses, were arranged around three sides of a courtyard, with gates and wall forming a fourth side. A clock tower surmounts the central gable under which there is an arched opening. The style of the stable block is reminiscent of the simple Jacobean style employed at Poles, three years earlier. In many ways, George was the perfect architect for Burns to have employed, since the Jacobean/Elizabethan style, with all its picturesque elements, were very much George's *métier* and as a result his internal schemes are in perfect accord with the original spirit of the house. The addition of the south-west wing shows a similar respect, both for the external appearance of the existing house, and the dominance of that house in the overall impression. This was no easy task, since the additions were to double the size of the building. George achieved perfect harmony of style and positioning, by his subtle and sensitive use of his own interpretation of Elizabethan/

Jacobean forms, and his highly developed sense of proportion and fitness. The restored wing, together with the garden and architecture, the intimate and private nature of the south garden (created by restoring the original approach to the house), emphasising its impressive character to the visitor, rather than having him approach the mellower, more intimate south façade, are all testament to the sensitivity with which George tackled the individual problems posed by a commission.

The approach to the house was achieved by positioning a gatehouse, and constructing an adjoining bridge. The latter George treated simply, employing stone, and using an old fashioned, but effective, cut-water plan to the centre pier in the middle of the stream, carrying a triangular recess corbelled over it. This was possible, presumably because there was not much force in the water and created an undeniably old-world effect. The entry to the bridge, at each end, is marked by a semi-octagonal bay spreading from the roadway, and terminated by small obelisks on pedestals, which form a stop to the walls. The adjoining two-storeyed octagonal lodge, with a central cluster of flues, forms an unusual, but undoubtedly picturesque, composition. The iron gates and stone wall complete the entrance to the Park.

The gardens at North Myms are worthy of close examination, since they involved a close partnership between Ernest George and William Robinson, the latter also a friend of Harold Peto. The spaciousness of the Park afforded ample scope, and a fine setting, for garden development.³⁵

George and Robinson, guided presumably to some extent by Burns, seized the spirit, and assimilated the details of the site, and related the garden to the environment of the house and landscape. The ground has a northern and eastern fall, the house standing in a level expanse at the foot of a gentle slope. In front of the north façade of the house spreads a broad balustraded terrace, with, immediately below, a formal parterre, with a geometrical pattern of clipped yew and box, reminiscent of Italian-influenced Victorian work. The clipped hedge, and parterre, both consort well with the graceful simplicity of the classical architecture, and provide an ideal transition between the sharp angular lines of the building, softened by restrained wall

furnishings, and the suave curves and gentle undulations of the natural timbered parkland beyond. The stretches of turf, on three sides, form an excellent platform and foil for the mass of the house; and there is just a measure of quiet formality revealed in the reticent treatment of the terrace, and the restrained introduction of architectural ornament elsewhere, which link the house to its setting.

In front of the west elevation, George and Robinson laid out the rose garden, which is a perfect illustration of how a space close to the house can be made to serve the ends of the gardener, and yet conform to the needs of the architect. This rectangular spot behind the new south-west wing called for a treatment using straight lines and right angles. It provides a charming example of a formal layout, although William Robinson, the great natural gardener, would probably scarcely admit it to be so³⁶. Every inch of the geometric space can be utilized for flower growing, and the arrangement might have been drawn from that of the west garden at Gravetye Manor, Sussex, Robinson's house. Clearly the design and size of the beds, and their arrangement, were dictated by the space available, and arranged in such a way as to provide scope for good and generous planting. Simple, and essentially practical in its conception and execution, with the paths laid in rectangular and random paving, affording ample means of access to each bed, as well as ample and unbroken bands of background to the floral effects, it provides an excellent marriage between architecture and gardening, and of a close relationship between a house and its garden. The sheltered position was particularly propitious for the cultivation of plants.

On a lower level from the rose garden, a large walled enclosure, originally the kitchen garden, was turned into a garden with a square plot of lawn in the centre, enclosed on four sides by broad paved paths flanked by wide borders, which run below the walls. Passing through a wrought iron gate, circular in design, set in the southern boundary of the wall of the herbaceous garden, the shrub garden is reached - again well stocked. Beyond the shrub bed is the pergola garden, laid and designed by Robinson, probably with help from George. There is not much remaining of the constructional work in the pergola garden - the planting is, however, excellent. The pergola is of good proportions, and the paths of ample width. Planned on a geometrical pattern, vistas

are provided along and across its length, to which a few well placed oil jars act as focus points. Returning to the house, George planned the enclosed south garden in a formal manner, paths running north-south and east-west with a fountain situated at their crossing. Behind the south entrance gates, just inside the garden, two small areas with geometric paths were to be enclosed by clipped hedges.

Although George was to execute many series of additions and alterations, the work at North Myrms demonstrated the full range of his talents, extending as it did beyond architecture and interior decoration.

All that remains of the south-west wing of the house, is the ground floor loggia with mosaic vaults, just white marble wall-decoration, and an extremely 'juicy' bronze gate. The house has remained in the hands of the Burns family. The new wing was demolished C.1948 by the owner W.A.G.Burns, in order to make the house smaller. The South Hall, Library, Jacobean Room and Entrance Hall, all remain. The garden has all but completely disappeared now.

Wayford Manor; Crewkerne; Somerset (C.1902)

In 1902³⁷ the opportunity arose for George and Yeates to extend and restore an original Elizabethan house, Wayford Manor, Crewkerne, Somerset, purchased in 1898-99 by Harold Peto's sister Helen Agnes. In 1885 Helen Peto, the last of the Peto children to be born at Somerleyton, married Ingham Baker, son of Lawrence James Baker of Haydon Hall, Pinner. Until their purchase of Wayford Manor, the Bakers lived at Eastcote Lodge, on the Haydon Hall Estate designed for them in 1888 by George and Peto (See Chapter 4).

The village of Wayford lies above one side of the River Axe valley, some three miles west of Crewkerne on the Somerset/Dorset border. The village nestles on a steep slope, with the bridge and Clapton Mill below, and the breezy Windwhistle on the summit. The 'barrier of hill' which shuts off three Somerset parishes from the plain of Taunton away to the north, is only felt as a presence in the background.

Wayford's sunny slope faces south down the valley. The church and manor house occupy a shelf on the south side of the village street, Wayford Manor digs itself in immediately west of the church, which, being small and towerless, manages to keep to road level.

There had been a house in Wayford from medieval times, but Giles Daubeney rebuilt this ancestral home in the time of Queen Elizabeth I. An early history of Wayford is briefly set out in The Particular Description of Somerset, compiled by Thomas Gerard of Trent at the time of Charles I. 'Wayford', he reports,

'had in foregoing ages Lords of the same name; for Edward the Second's survey tells mee it was then owned by Scolastica de Wayford,' (the sister of St Benedict and a popular saint and patroness who married a William de Blandford), 'whose grandfather Thomas' (probably a slip for grandson) 'by his sonne William left one only daughter Elinor, married to Robert Pouncefoot of Compton Pouncefoot.' 38

Their daughter Eliza

'brought it in marriage right unto her husband, James Dawbuny, a second brother to Giles, Lord Dawbuny whose posterity owne it at this time, and being allured with the pleasantnes of ye place have built a faire house upon it for their habitation well accommodated with gardens and orchards'. 39

James, the younger brother of Lord Daubeney, in contrast to his ancestors who had enjoyed splendid, if chequered careers, was a lover of the quiet pursuits of country gentlemen. He served as Sheriff of Somerset

and Dorset in 1488 and his son Giles married a sister of Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter. Dying in 1559, Giles was succeeded by his son Hugh, the latter outliving his father by only six years leaving a widow and a large family. In his will he bequeathed money for the repair of Wayford Church and left 'his capital mansion', to his wife, Joan, for life and to his son Giles, 'all my armour'. It was presumably after the death of his mother that Giles undertook the rebuilding of the 'faire house'. 40

The desired westward aspect can only have been achieved as a result of much excavation and terracing, since the north wing of the little E-shaped house is sunk into the slope while the south wing stands out, bold and commanding. The intention of so positioning the house, was presumably to dignify the front of the house with the forecourt and loggia, defy gales from the south, and retain all the advantages that a southward sloping site offered for laying out terraced walls and gardens. Though Giles Daubeney did not achieve all this during his lifetime (it took three centuries to complete), his intentions were so clear that the early twentieth century conclusion could be said to have been the fulfilment of his original aspirations.

Before discussing George and Yeates's additions and alterations it is essential to discuss the existing fabric of the house in order to assess the degree of continuity and appropriateness of both George and Yeates's intended, and actual contributions.

Although the outward view of the house presents only Elizabethan features, it is quite probable that it incorporates in its structure an earlier fabric. (Pl. 367) If the plan of the house is considered before George and Yeates's addition of the north wing, then perhaps the characteristic plan of a small medieval house is revealed, with the hall entered at one end by a screens passage, the kitchen to the left, the parlour and the solar to the right. The blackened state of some timbers that survive in the roof of the principal range shows that the hall, now of one storey, was once of the open medieval kind with no fireplace but a central hearth. But there is no evidence of medieval work on the outside of the building, for where the walling is not of ashlar, it is covered with plaster, which has been toned, by lichen, to that of the stonework. On the eastward side of the house is a small courtyard, the eastern range of which is formed by a medieval building of fourteenth century date. It is of two storeys, access to the upper being obtained by a stone staircase from the

courtyard. In its end wall, which abuts onto the churchyard, is a single-light window with cusped head, and the east window of the upper room retains its rebates for wood shutters, although the lights have been glazed. This little building, connected to the house by a return range on the south, was probably used by the visiting priest, Wayford, in early days having been a chapelry of Crewkerne.

The porch at the front of the house, with its triple-arch loggia, calls for consideration. ^(Pl. 368) It bears a striking resemblance to the south loggia at Cranborne Manor house in Dorset. It is quite likely that Daubeney employed the same mason as Robert Cecil had at Cranborne, William Arnold, established by Sir Thomas Jackson as the architect of Wadham College, Oxford. Daubeney's work at Wayford seems to have been c.1602, the library chimney bears this date, and Robert Cecil began work on the alteration and modernization of the old hunting lodge at Cranborne in 1607. The two loggias are very similar, although that at Wayford is marginally simpler in treatment. The elaborate triglyph frieze and the channelling of the lower portions of the columns is absent at Wayford. Otherwise the resemblance is almost identical, the same shell-headed niches appear flanking the entrance, and on the inner sides of the porch, in both cases, the centre arch is wider than the others and there is the same emphasis of the alternate voussoirs with Tudor roses carved between them. At Wayford, the voussoirs themselves are carved alternately with the Daubeney arms.

Apart from the loggia, there are no other Renaissance features about the exterior of the house which is a good example of vernacular work with characteristic mullioned and transomed windows, and banding strings of the usual Gothic section.

Internally, most of the original decoration has disappeared, except from the library which retains its ribbed plaster ceiling and a massive Ham Hill stone chimney piece. A large studded oak entrance door leads from the loggia into the Medieval Hall, 30'6" x 19' x 12', with its wide Tudor fireplace. The walls are oak panelled and the ceiling is reconstituted plaster, and therefore probably by George and Yeates. The hall has an oak floor and long window seat and a small stained glass window. There is also a small cellar store and an oak door into the rear enclosed courtyard. In the south-west corner in the projecting wing, is the library 22' x 17' x 11'4", which has high oak-panelled walls and range

of fitted oak bookshelves on one wall and two built-in cupboards with carved doors bearing the date 1746. The ceiling, with ribbed plaster, is of a type common in Dorset and Somerset houses of the time, and exhibits several of the usual moulds employed. A similar treatment of the fleur-de-lis, with springs emerging from between their lobes, occurs in the ceilings at Mapperton in Dorset. The design of the chimneypiece seems likely to have been the work of William Arnold, since there are two shell-headed niches over the fireplace similar to those found in the entrance porch. The egg and tongue ornament, which is used as a neat enrichment of the mantleshelf cornice, reappears on a gigantic scale to frame the sunk panel of the overmantel, the cartouche with Flemish strapwork is not dissimilar to the north loggia at Cranborne.

The staircase, replaced by George and Yeates is contained behind the library, and leads up to a small room which was probably the medieval solar, which had full length panelled walls and ribbed plaster ceiling similar to that in the library. The solar has a handsome stone fireplace and a wide south facing window which affords panoramic views over the Axe valley. On the other, north side of the Hall, lies the dining room, formerly the medieval kitchen, with stone fireplace, oak mantel shelf and oak flooring.

George and Yeates were employed by Ingham and Helen Baker C.1900 to make additions and undertake restoration work. Three extant plans, dated 1902, show that the intended work was not executed in full. The addition of the north wing, making the house E-shaped, doubtless in accordance with Daubeney's original intentions, was executed as shown in the 1902 plans. ^(Pl. 369 & 370) The addition involved the creation of a dining room out of a mediaeval kitchen to the north of the hall, leading to a domestic passage with quarry tiled floor and servant s' staircase. George's plan indicates from west to east, smoking room, lavatory, storeroom, pantry, kitchen, scullery leading to WC and bootroom to the south, and coal cellar and larder, to the north. On the first floor, George provided bedrooms, housemaids room, separate WC and linen cupboard.

It is clear from the 1902 plans that George and Yeates had more ambitious ideas for the south wing of the house. ^(Pl. 371) These involved the utilization of the courtyard cottage (which now runs along the south side, separated from the house by the loggia built by Peto). George and Yeates clearly wished to incorporate a block which would have served to link the

two blocks of main house and courtyard cottage, and would have allowed provision for a grander staircase than that which already existed. The plans reveal that the library was to become a drawing room to the south-west, and the additional building would create a long and imposing library, replete with four windows, including a long, five-sided, two-storied window which would have also served an upstairs master bedroom, planned above the library. This manorial window, to be much like those at Stoodleigh and Batsford, would have faced south, and flooded the library with light, providing an opportunity for George to include his favourite window seat, with a fine view over the valley. Unfortunately, the addition, together with the plans for using the solar as a boudoir, appear to have been thwarted, for one reason or another. The first floor plan had involved no less than ten bedrooms, served by three dressing rooms, one above the porch, one above the solar and one facing south. These rooms were to be served by one bathroom in the new north wing, clearly an inconvenient and impractical arrangement.

Externally the north wing accords with the 1902 drawing, not so the south wing. The proposal showed a door from the terrace into the library, a mullioned window, buttress and two-storeyed crenellated stone window to the east, ^(Pl.369) the alterations, however were to be much less ambitious. The extant arrangement had no connecting block, instead a loggia, with partly glazed conservatory and an open verandah, with five open arches, supported by Ham Hill stone columns designed by Harold Peto, was positioned between the south wing and courtyard cottage. It has a doorway into the inner courtyard.

It seems likely that when the 1902 plans were abandoned, George was asked to convert the priest's room to a chapel. Helen Baker was considered to be something of a religious fanatic, and is likely to have wanted a private chapel. The building was a fourteenth century priest's room, approached by stone steps. Also grouped around the courtyard was the old parish school room. It is not altogether clear whether George altered the cottage, which forms the south side of the courtyard, with its sitting room, living room and three bedrooms, but it is likely.

The traditional gift of architect to patron was in this case a mosaic showing a crab motif, set into ironwork to form a table. Also in wrought-iron, was the well-head and bucket frame, which George designed to cover the old Ham Hill stone-topped well. ^(Pl.372) It bears a striking resemblance to that at Rousdon, which is only about twelve miles away.

Helen Baker, by all accounts a dominating woman who would not allow her son to marry any of the women of his choice, died in 1929, at the age of sixty-nine. The house passed to her son, Humphrey Lawrence Peto Baker, and so remained until his death in 1966, at the age of seventy-nine.

Harold Peto reconstituted the garden and terraces for his sister and brother-in-law. His layout perfectly suited the old house and made capital out of the opportunities offered by the sloping site. His loggia design, while the porch loggia in spirit, was much in accordance with his own taste, and suited perfectly the generally Italianate feel of the garden design. The Italianate flavour resulted from Peto's designs for the courtyard terraces, the stone pillared balustrade, pools, and the columnar cypresses and junipers. After Peto's remodelling all that remained of the original garden reputed to have been Elizabethan, was the uppermost terrace and the flight of stone steps down to the terrace below.

A short gravel drive leads in from the road to the front of the house. A paved forecourt has four terra-cotta Italian urns flanking the approach to the porch. On the right is another little court with figs and small fir trees reminiscent of the yard of an Italian inn, with a statue of Hermes in the centre, while on the left is a low stone wall. The approach to the house is bounded by a clipped horseshoe-shaped yew hedge surrounding a fine copy of the Byzantine font at Ravenna, behind which are two tall Italian cypresses, particularly fine, since they have grown through the gravel path.

From the front portion of the house, Peto cut an arch in the massive old yew hedge, opening onto a view across the valley to the distant Dorset hills. Beyond this, extends a long terrace walk, which runs at right angles to the front of the house, along to a small arbour set against the wall. A few planted formal beds, some clipped topiary, and a small rectangular water-lily pool complete with a fine fountain figure of a boy holding a fish, are shaded by two enormous chestnuts from the terrace below. As elsewhere in the garden, and typical of Harold Peto's designing, the effect of formality is softened by masses of flowers spilling out onto the stones, and the self-sown seeds of linaria and other dwarf plants among them which have been left wherever possible. A few steps beside a columnar juniper lead down to a long grass terrace, bordered by a stone balustrade which Peto set on top of the old stone wall.

The design for this Ham Hill stone balustrade, which runs along this main terrace, was determined from pieces dug up many years previously; some of these pieces were used to flank a short flight of steps leading from one corner into another small, walled garden. Peto arranged an archway from the latter, which leads down to the main terrace garden, more generally approached down the old stone steps in the centre of the wall and balustrade. The gardens continue down the hill to a sloping walled platt lying below the terrace, with a prominent magnolia tree. This forms the transition between the formal and the wild garden, which succeeds it, and where conifers, junipers and cypresses shield a luxurious growth of rhododendrons, azaleas and other, rare flowering shrubs.

Wayford Manor, with its tawny yellow Ham Hill stone, forms an unusually beautiful setting for a hillside garden, which the Bakers, with the help of Harold Peto, assiduously developed. The architectural work by George and Yeates was admirably in keeping with the earlier house, the new wing balancing, but not servilely copying, the old. The commission holds a special place in George's work, since it is likely that he and Yeates collaborated with Harold Peto.⁴¹

Crathorne Hall, Yarm-on-Tees, Yorkshire (1903-06)

Crathorne Hall, not only holds a special place in the development of George's work, but also in the history of the Edwardian country house. It was to be one of George's last two country houses and exceptional in his oeuvre, since he chose to abandon Renaissance in favour of the style of the locality, where Renaissance motifs were combined with Palladian fronts. Crathorne Hall is also reputed to be the largest house built in this country during the Edwardian period, containing as it does, one hundred and fifty rooms, forty-one bedrooms and thirty different types of room, requiring fourteen different categories of servant.

In many ways, the appearance of Crathorne Hall is entirely traditional, according with the growing acceptance of the quiet classicism of Neo-Georgian, by contemporary domestic architects, but Crathorne Hall contained many innovations and labour saving devices, which aided the smooth running of everyday life. Careful examination reveals that the style and planning of the house, while showing a perceptible change in taste and purpose compared with earlier houses by George, indicate that Crathorne was the last manifestation of the old-established order.

The client was James Lionel Dugdale (1862-1941), whose family had long been associated with the cotton manufacturing industry in Lancashire. Dugdale's great-grandfather Nathaniel (1761-1816), had founded the Lowerhouse Mill, Near Burnley in 1813.⁴² In 1836 the Dugdales had financed the building of a new, five storey, fireproofed factory, reputedly designed by Sir William Fairbairn. The firm expanded into spinning, weaving and calico printing⁴³, and by the mid 1840s the Dugdales' business had become one of the largest and most prosperous cotton manufacturing firms in Lancashire. In addition, they became merchants and shippers, of some importance, selling four or five times as much as they manufactured themselves. They also developed several overseas interests - three large mills in the cotton growing area of the USA, and for fifteen years financed the firms of Messrs Tata in Bombay.

By 1868, the firm was in the hands of Nathaniel's grandsons, John and James Tertius⁴⁴, after the death of James Senior (1791-1868), and the entrance into politics of the third partner, solicitor Richard Shaw in 1868. During the 1870s, the firm became more

ordinary, having withdrawn from foreign commitments, but nevertheless, Lowerhouse Mill remained one of the largest cotton factories in England. In January 1880, a year before his death, John Dugdale sold his shares to his brother, and the partnership was finally dissolved, leaving James Tertius sole owner of John Dugdale and Brothers.

As early as 1845, at the age of twenty-one, and fifteen years before his marriage, John Dugdale had purchased the 'manor of Crathorne', Yorkshire, at auction. John married in 1860, and he and his wife Charlotte (d 1891), were to live at Irwell Bank, Pendleton, Eccles, Lancashire, presumably considering Crathorne as a country retreat, an escape from the smokey atmosphere caused by the mill chimney - the ostensible reason for James Tertius buying Sezincote, near Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire in 1884 (built 1805 by Sir Charles Cockerell), being that his wife disliked the atmosphere at Lowerhouse.

None of the Dugdale family had engaged in any notable building, contenting themselves with substantial and plain houses, and the philanthropic development, in the 1830s and 1840s, of Lowerhouse village, largely in a decent Lancashire vernacular.

John Dugdale was no exception, appearing to have shown no interest in replacing the existing Crathorne Hall, described as 'small and rather plain'⁴⁵. He died in 1881, leaving the estate to his only son James Lionel (1862-1941), who was, it would seem, never involved in the family business. Educated at Eton, James married Maud Violet Woodruffe, and their only son, Thomas Lionel (1897-1977), became first Baron Crathorne in 1945. Having had no direct part in the business, James Lionel Dugdale was described as 'landowner', when in 1903, at the age of forty-one, he set about rebuilding Crathorne Hall. Since the house was not to be a principal residence, rather than a 'country retreat', Dugdale presumably found the original inadequate, both in size and design.

George was sixty-four when he received the commission, the foundation stone was laid in 1903 and the remaining plans date from 3 July - 17 November 1903.⁴⁶ The elevations and plans were exhibited in May and June of that year⁴⁷ at the Royal Academy. George's Royal Academy drawing differs from the extant design of the garden front. By 1903, George had obviously earned the reputation of being adept at providing both the scenery, and machinery, for life in great households. Crathorne Hall was to be a grand finale in both respects.

Many aspects of the design of Crathorne Hall show George addressing

familiar issues, a concern for the picturesque, attention to detail, a sense of site and changes of 'date' in the design. However the design also raises the issue of whether George was interested in the discipline of classicism, since he so obviously adopted an austere classical style, at least in part of the house.

The house is set in acres of parkland, and approached from the west by a winding drive. The large courtyard to the north, is entered through a stone boundary wall from the west, so that the majestic grandeur of the north front is not immediately ^(Pl. 373) apparent. The style is generally Neo-Georgian, with a Palladian garden front; the more familiar Jacobean-style entrance elevation does not interfere with the frankly classical emphasis. While a general feeling of classical symmetry is apparent in both north and south elevations; ^(Pl. 374) on closer examination the north elevation is less symmetrical, the eastern wing containing billiard room, projecting forward to form one side of the service court, while to the west, a lower wing formed the boudoir, as ^(Pls 374 & 376) a result the fenestration of the wings is irregular and asymmetrical. While the house appears initially somewhat austere, it is certainly not without charm, nor features characteristic of George. The twin bell towers in the inner angles of the forecourt, with concave shaped roofs, surmounted by lanterns, while contributing to the well judged note of distinction, are reminiscent of those employed to more overtly picturesque advantage at Dunley Hill (1886), Cawston Manor (1896), and Ruckley Grange (1904). It was an arrangement used by George's assistant of 1883, Arnold Mitchell at Barnett Hill, Surrey (1906), in a large handsome house in the later Renaissance style for Frank Cook,⁴⁸ with a deep entrance court formed by the billiard room on one side and staircase towers in the angles, recalling those at Crathorne.

The service quarters, and servants wing, are neatly arranged around a central service courtyard, and although of three storeys, are much smaller and lower than the main house. The decorative stonework under the eaves of the main block, is echoed in the service quarter, and although at a lower level, forms a visual link with the main body of the house. George shows a genuine desire for discretion in his handling of the service quarters. ^(Pl. 377)

The sunless north side appears crisp and somewhat austere, if a little forbidding, in its majestic proportions. The grouping of the entrance front is simple and dignified, with its towers flanking

the low, massive central porch. The air of solidity is emphasised by the fine ashlar of the walls, which are built in a rich cream coloured stone (Swainby), quarried from the adjoining hills, while the roof is covered with brownish-coloured stone slates from Colly Weston.

(Pl.374)

The south elevation shows complete symmetry, with projecting central classical portico on a rusticated base, flanked by two-storeyed projecting bays. This symmetry is maintained, to a degree, in the recessed service wing. The recent work at Shockerwick (1896), must surely have been fresh in George's mind - the approaches to the two houses are similar.

The inherent austerity of the classical style which, it was currently being discovered, could retreat into a dull, lifeless pastiche, was relieved by a series of well judged features, although The Builder felt the house to be 'altogether pleasing . . . If somewhat too archaeological in character'.⁴⁹ While George's competent interpretation of Palladian motifs on the south front demonstrated knowledge of precedent, mere copyism was avoided by means of a subtle handling of proportion and detail. The pitch of the roof is quite steep and the sturdy central portico is further heightened in effect by a characteristically steep pediment. The general arrangement of the central portico might have been influenced by that of James Paine at Bywell Park, Northumberland (c.1760). Furthermore, the general skyline was diversified, not only by the two high, raised concave roofs of the towers, but also by the tall chimneys, five servicing the main house, and seven the service wing. The original plans show a chimney, serving the boudoir, which is absent in the extant building, and the wide central chimney, with its three linked stacks was subject to change, in order to introduce the characteristic decorative pediment at its base. Further relief is offered by the stepped, and deeply indented cornerstones, ornamental balustrades, and a touch of vaguely Art Nouveau wrought-ironwork in the fanlight and the balcony of the south portico. Wrought-ironwork also decorates the round windows of the entrance porch. The pediment contained the Crathorne coat-of-arms, a feature which also appears within the broken segmental pediment surmounting the main entrance, and again in the main hall. The pinnacles on the corners of the south bays recall earlier decorative preferences

and they appear again as firedogs in the dining room. On a lighter note, the heraldic beasts guarding the entrance to the sunken garden, recall those in the halls at Stoodleigh Court (1883) and 37 Harrington Gardens (1881-82).

Fenestration is largely square, on the south facade, symmetrical, the largest and most decorative windows relating to the principal ground floor rooms. The central block of windows are the most elaborate, columns which begin in wood inside the main hall internally, continue in stone above the rusticated ground floor, in the portico. On the north front the window arrangement is less regular, but indicates more clearly, the function of spaces within. Tall windows, set high in the west tower, light the main staircase, and at the corner of the west bay a tall, narrow window belonging to the boudoir, simultaneously admitted light and allowed ladies to view approaching visitors, while a projecting bay with leaded roof, looked west from the boudoir across the secluded rose garden. The billiard room sports a deliberately grand Venetian window, the only relief on the eastern bay. Variations occur on the garden side of the servants wing, the ground floor windows are small, with curved heads echoing the central garden doorway, and forming a sympathetic accordance with the segmental arches over the central windows of morning and dining rooms.

One of the salient qualities of the design is its perfect suitability for the setting, reflecting contemporary taste but more significantly and forcefully, endorsing George's talent in this respect. Legend holds that George and Dugdale stalked the proposed area with a pair of stepladders in order to secure the most propitious site. An understanding of the character of the countryside is essential to an appreciation of George's sensitivity. Although not so bleak as Northumberland and Durham, where the bracing climate and unrelenting landscape must have daunted architects of lesser calibre and courage than Vanbrugh, Dobson and Shaw, Yarm-on-Tees, the site of the Crathorne estate, lies in the somewhat bleak country of the Durham, Yorkshire border. The land does not stand high by many standards, since it is towards the north of the Vale of York with its outlet to the sea north of the Tees, and has the Cleveland Hills and North Riding moors beyond, to the south-east. Nevertheless, the scenery does engender a feeling of rather grim expansiveness. There can be no doubt

that, despite the contemporary shift in taste towards Neo-Georgian and its suitability for a design of this size, George was significantly influenced by the marked character of the local landscape, which encouraged him to abandon his Elizabethan and Jacobean idiom in favour of this quiet, sturdy style. The house attains a perfect synthesis with the straightforward strength, even hardness, of North Yorkshire.

The Builder, as late as 1910, commented

'The designs for domestic buildings exhibited this year show an increasing appreciation of the necessity for a skilful wedding of the actual building with its surroundings, too much neglected during the last century, and undoubtedly display a marked feeling for the picturesque as a whole ... One of the most noticeable is the drawing of Crathorne Hall, Yorks... a drawing that renders in an attractive way a design in which the simplest means are successful in achieving an effect of undoubted dignity' 50

Clearly the use of local Swainby stone enhanced the indigenous character, but the adaptation seems more subtle than that. The exterior treatment and planning of the house seem to have created an architectural expression which is the result, not only of the adoption of late seventeenth century motifs, but also of a respectful reference to Yorkshire's architectural traditions and landscape.

Elaborate gardens were laid out around the house, on the north side, opposite to the main entrance, lies 'The Glade', a long, broad, grassed walk, bordered by trees. To the west is a hedged rose garden, and to the south, the main gardens. There is also a formal, paved garden in front of the south front of the servants' wing, which has stone alcoves jutting out from the ground floor to form small, sheltered sitting-out places, supporting bay windows in the floor above. To the east of this garden is a stone wall, with a small integral storage space having access from the outside, presumably to house garden stores out of sight from the main house. The wall on this side forms a boundary between the gardens and the parkland beyond, not that the gardens were purely ornamental, in 1905 glass houses were erected by W. Richardson & Co., at a cost of £918.15s.0d, presumably to cultivate produce as well as flowers. On the approach to the house, hidden in the trees, is the stable block. ^(Pls 378 & 379) Again, this is comfortably apportioned, square in plan, with the main entrance surmounted by a small clock tower.

George's planning had always shown an inclination towards symmetry, and at Crathorne Hall George favoured a variation of the north corridor plan (used by Lutyens at Little Thakenham (1902-03), and Mitchell at Barnett Hill (1905-06), with dining room, hall and morning room all facing south, leaving only the billiard room and boudoir facing north. Any practical inconveniences of planning resulting from the long corridors, were alleviated by the number of servants, which allowed George a free hand in the creation of an elegant solution. Indeed the symmetry dictated by a Georgian style is not always conducive to domestic work, but George appears to have created a happy medium, despite one or two unusual aspects. The public rooms, for example, are comparatively few for a house of that size - this might be equated with the relaxing of social order in the Edwardian period, and a general reduction in the number of rooms; for example, smoking was allowed in the drawing room, together presumably, with the billiard room and hall. There is no drawing room, smoking room, or library, and yet the traditional preserves were maintained; in this case, gentlemen to the east, and ladies to the west. The kitchen was situated at a distance from the dining room - the retention of this tradition was possible on account of the number of servants, which meant that practical considerations for the convenience of everyday living were not of paramount importance.

As with the handling of proportion and detail on the exterior, the interior spaces and detail show George to be reluctant to adhere to the strict discipline of classicism. Anxious to eschew possible austerity, the general feeling of classicism is relieved by occasional references to Renaissance sources, particularly in the hall and dining room fireplaces.

The house is entered by the central porch, through double oak doors (the glass of which is protected by vertical brass rails), into a wide entrance hall running east/west. The barrel ceiling, with its regular, decorative plasterwork, terminates at each end in a lunette enclosing paintings of Nox and Aurora by Baron Arild Rosenkrantz, who had worked for George on several recent occasions, designing series of heraldic windows for the Gothic hall at Welbeck Abbey (1900-02), and Foxcombe, Boars Hill (1898-C.1904). The walls of the hall are panelled in oak, with a decorative frieze and carved oak flower swags over the

(Pl.383)

the double doorways, one on each side, leading into the main hall. The latter was, and still is, the most elegant room in the house, and acted as a drawing room as well as formal room, with large windows commanding a fine view, to the south, over the parkland to the Cleveland Hills beyond. The doorways are deeply framed in oak, with carved pediments showing the family coat of arms above. The fireplace is similarly framed, and a large piece of oak, carved with the coat of arms, forms a magnificent chimney breast. The central window bay, opposite the fireplace, is stepped outwards to form an outside bay and round columns of oak, carved to match the door and window frames, continue the line of the wall. Originally the walls were hung with silk panels. An unprecedented degree of reticent elegance is introduced into this room by means of the handling of proportion and fine detailing of pilasters and mouldings - a quality more easily associated with Harold Peto, than George and Yeates.

Opening out from the hall to the east, is the dining room, a formal room with plain oak panelling and a plaster ceiling of regular design. ^(Pl.384) George noted on an early drawing that, 'this stone chimney piece is already built in position' ⁵¹. There were several stone masons in the immediate area, and it is quite possible that one came, as early as 1903, to execute the work. Across the vestibule lies the business room, with oak bookcases fitted into the wall, and leading off this, a strongroom, deep in the heart of the house. The large ^(Pl.385) billiard room occupies a position similar to that which George was to add to Shockerwick House in 1907. The room is oak panelled, with raised dais and divided from the lower level by an arcade in mahogany. A cloakroom adjoins.

The morning room, to the west, is a mirror image of the dining room, although much lighter and less formal in decoration as was customary. A passage leading to the garden divides morning room and boudoir, the latter having a domed ceiling in the Adam style. On drawing no.98 George specified,

'pilasters to be formed of wood, with carton pierre enrichment, cornices and frieze to be in fibrous plaster.' ⁵²

The Builder lamented in 1903

'There is no compass, and we observe that the dining room, hall and morning room all face the same way, but what is the aspect there is nothing to show. This may be alright however, unless the hall acts as drawing room, there is no drawing room shown on the plan; it

may be of course on the first floor, though this arrangement, inevitably generally in town houses, is not a common one in country houses'. 53

Indeed informal arrangements were made. The main staircase, to the west, wide and oak panelled, leads up to an oak floored corridor, with bedrooms on the first floor. The master bedroom, facing south in the centre, had its own bathroom - mosaic tiled, and filled with walk-in wardrobe with mahogany cupboards, linen-lined along two walls. According to the present Lord Crathorne, this room was adopted as an upstairs sitting room for many years, in the absence of a drawing room on the ground floor. This is not surprising, since aside from the magnificent view, the room is a more comfortable size than the hall.

Bedrooms to the west were for visiting ladies, and to the east, for visiting bachelors. The segregation of sleeping quarters could often lead to planning difficulties, but George seems to have arranged the forty-one bedrooms and seven bathrooms, in a logical manner, with due regard for the available space. The staircase to the second floor is narrower, and leaves the landing through a decorative archway. On this floor the rooms are smaller, and the central corridor narrower, with a deal block floor. The two rooms over the morning room (18 and 19 on plan), one of which has an attractive, delicately patterned ceiling, were designated for housemaid and ladies maid; likewise bedrooms (24-28), to the east, were for maids.

Certain elements of the plan clung to a tradition which was fast changing at the turn of the century. For example the nursery suite was on the first floor, above the butler's rooms ⁵⁴. In earlier times, childrens' rooms had normally been at the top of the house, fitted in wherever convenient, the vital consideration being to keep children out of the adults' way. Country Life commented of Crathorne Hall,

'The whole of the nursery quarters are so isolated, as they should be, and served by a separate corridor'. 55

a comment, presumably directed at progressive Edwardian taste, which occasionally allowed the nursery suite to encroach on the best part

of the main block, previously reserved for principal bedrooms, placing children within easy reach of their parents; for example Ditton Place, West Sussex (1904), by Cecil Brewer, and Barnett Hill, Guildford, Surrey (1905-06), by Arnold Mitchell.

Undoubtedly, the main body of the house provided an elegant setting for a country family, but it was in the provision for servants that Crathorne Hall excelled.

Since the house was large, it was designed to accommodate a complex panoply of the social order, perhaps more characteristic of an earlier period, than the nascent, but growing vogue for a reduced servant quota; the latter made possible by the rise of mechanical labour saving devices; which were shortly to render some household departments luxuries, rather than necessities. A.S.G. Butler remarked in The Architecture of Sir Edwin Lutyens,

'in the big houses built in the reign of Edward VII, much thought was given to the accommodation of the staff, usually with a view rather to their reasonable comfort than to save labour. For there was plenty of labour available, and devices for saving it were in their infancy'. 56

The servants at Crathorne were well catered for, by contemporary standards, but were also furnished with a number of modern labour saving devices. The living areas were clearly identified and articulated, and the servants quarters were kept completely separate from the main part of the house. These quarters did not, however, break with George's favoured courtyard arrangement. The servants' hall occupied the central space between the specialist rooms, encouraging a traditional propriety. The kitchen, scullery, and larder were as far removed from the main part of the house as possible, to prevent cooking smells from pervading the house. There was little or no need to be concerned about any difficulty in transporting meals over such a distance since there was no shortage of servants. The larders were placed on the north-west corner of the service court, for ventilation and coolness, and there were other large storage areas in the basement. The 1906 edition of Mrs Beeton's Household Management, suggested that anything 'from a four to a six course meal would be normal for an upper or middle class family entertaining, even for breakfast'. 57

Consequently, kitchen storage and preparation areas would need to be extensive. On the original plans the kitchen windows were intended to be of similar size to the others on the ground floor, and there was to be a linen/work room above. However, George notes alterations on the plans changing the window height, and raising the height of the kitchen over two floors, thus eliminating the linen room to give an extremely light and airy kitchen. The author of the Country Life article of 1911 particularly appreciated this feature,

'The kitchen is especially good, being very lofty and with an east side containing particularly large windows'. 58

The kitchen was to have a wood block floor and tiled dado. Plans also show air ducts under the floor, and the kitchen also contained a large open fire, with a turnspit driven by an electric motor and 'an assemblage of cogwheels which would not to dishonour an 110 ton gun'. 59

The kitchen was well supplied with gadgets, including a coffee grinder and large refrigerator. A white enamelled refrigerator 3'x2' long, 1' x 10' wide, 4'5" high lined with white enamelled iron plates, costing £15.4s.0d. was supplied in 1906. Also supplied, 'a small deal table for the maids to sit at', 60 presumably for the maids who waited on servants in the servants' hall.

There was no laundry provision at Crathorne, but since a completely separate group of cottages are known as laundry cottages, it can be assumed that the laundry work was kept away from the house. It was often the case that the laundry was autonomous, this providing a meeting place for male and female servants.

Beneath the service wing was an extensive underworld of various storage spaces; for coal (two qualities), coke for the heating, a large tiled area for food, an extensive wine cellar, and an additional strong room - all necessities for such a large house, situated in the country. The upper floors housed the servants' rooms, which were reasonably airy and bright, the smallest being a room of cubicles for visiting men servants, although even these were sufficiently large to take several items of furniture. Visiting maids slept in rooms 30-33 on the second floor, above the nursery wing. The servants had their own staircases up to the upper floors, plain and narrow with iron balustrades.

The hall was built and furnished by George Trollope & Sons, and from the detailed furniture account, the difference between householders and servants is apparent, although in this house, even the humblest of servants was adequately sheltered. In the master bedroom, in addition to the walk-in wardrobe there was

'mahogany Sheraton furniture, dressing table, chest of drawers, writing table, double bedstead, cheval glass, two bedside cupboards, two dressing armchairs, two simple chairs, towel airer plus a reupholstered sofa and two simple chairs',

and the room was furnished with

'an extra super blue Wilton pile carpet (at a cost of £91.16s.0d. and Paris toile ombre window curtains with cream 'barola' lining, interlined with calico'. 61

At the other end of the scale, the cubicles for visiting men servants were furnished with

'black iron bedsteads, wire sprung mattresses, green painted chests of drawers, tray glasses, stick back Windsor chairs and Japanese oak towel airers'. 62

Osbert Sitwell comments in Left Hand Right Hand!

'The Edwardians squandered their accumulated riches at the shrine of the strange goddess, comfort; they spent them on the installation of bathrooms, electric light and radiators'. 63

It was not until the turn of the century that houses had more than one bathroom, such houses were considered 'luxurious'. There were seven bathrooms to forty-one bedrooms at Crathorne, and also several sinks on the landings to provide water for the bedrooms, which reduced the carrying of water by servants. George and Yeates also made provision for central heating, the coils were housed under the window seats, under staircases or, as on the top landing, in boxed cupboards to allow the warm air to escape. Installation of heating was referred to, on Drawing 97; George gives instructions for the dining room,

'at the side of long window, window board to be pierced to allow hot air to ascend - architects to be consulted before putting same in hand'. 64

From a constructional point of view, George and Yeates showed that they were ready to use what modern technology was available. Although the house was built of traditional materials, the use of concrete and rolled steel joists is noted in several places on the plans, for

example,

'this position of landing to be joists and flooring not concrete',

and

'note r.s.j.s. stop at external walls of tower' 65 .

The main contract for the house was with George Trollope and Sons, but other specialist firms were employed. Best and Sons, Civil Engineers submitted a lengthy account which included water supplies and electric lighting. Electric light was installed throughout the house, but again, the quality of the fittings depended upon the status of the rooms, and ranged from simple fittings in the servants' wing to elaborately ornamented brass designs in the grander rooms. In addition, wrought iron was used for lights outside the servants' courtyard, for those in the entrance porch, and for the torch-like lamps in the main porch. There were a number of electrical fittings installed, including nickel-plated electric hot plate in the dining room, 10lb pressing iron for brushing room, flat iron, nickel-plated for bedroom.

Water appeared to be a problem at first, as Best and Sons had arranged that water should be pumped

'from the river for building purposes, and water from existing well to be pumped to new house for domestic use', 66

but later a new well had to be sunk by Messrs Faker & Son, Well finders of Norwich. A water softener was installed in 1915.

Leisure, an important aspect of Victorian, but particularly Edwardian life, was catered for at Crathorne. Both indoor, with billiards, and outdoor, with gun room and cycle shed. No provision for motor cars was specifically allocated.

In additions to the alterations in the planning of the kitchen, other changes were made as work progressed. Originally the chimneys were to be of varying height, but in drawing No. 8 a note was made that this, 'central chimney raised 3' and all others to be brought up to the same height' ⁶⁷ , tracings to Trollope - 23 September 1904, and 'all chimneys in office wing to be raised 2' '.

At the same juncture, the housekeeper's room on the south-east corner was extended, the original plans finishing on the line of the upper floors.

George, as has been observed, was not slow to utilize all kinds of modern devices, including a service lift - he obviously had, however, a responsive client who welcomed, perhaps even initiated, such innovation. The modern aspects, however, are all set in a traditional house, with a high degree of craftsmanship and high quality of materials, oak panelling, brass fittings, and plaster carvings; in terms of planning, the accommodation of a long tried and tested, hierarchy. Throughout the design and furnishing of Crathorne Hall did succeed in combining, to a remarkable degree, the essential ingredients of Edwardian life - adequate housing and sufficient labour-saving devices for the staff, and an elegant, spacious, well-designed house for the client.

In 1912, a considerable amount of refurbishing, repairing, painting and decorating took place. The contractors were George Trollope and Sons, who submitted accounts for a total of £2,389.6s1d in August 1912/13. The structure of the building has remained very little changed, although in 1944 plans were considered by the owners to reduce the service court. The final plan drawn up by P.D.Hepworth included the complete elimination of the service quarters. However, demolition was to prove too expensive and so rooms were simply closed off. The house remained a family home until 1977, when Lord Crathorne's death prompted the sale. It is now a country hotel.

Olveston, Dunedin, New Zealand (1903- 06)

Olveston, Dunedin (1903- 06) is of particular interest, being the only private country house commission executed by George and Yeates in the Commonwealth, thus providing the opportunity of examining their response to a colonial location. In November 1903, George and Yeates drew up plans for the house for David Edward Theomin (1852-1933), a Bristolian who had emigrated to New Zealand, arriving in Melbourne in 1874. There is no evidence to suppose that George visited New Zealand, the building of the house was executed and supervised by local architects Mason and Wales ⁶⁸, between 1904-06, making it contemporary with work at Crathorne Hall (1903-06), and Eynsham Hall (1904-08).

In 1879, five years after his arrival in New Zealand, Theomin married Marie, a daughter to M. Michaelis of Melbourne and a member of the family who founded the Footscray Tannery, Melbourne ⁶⁹. In the same year, the couple went to live at Dunedin, setting up house in 'The Cottage', on part of the same property upon which Olveston was to be built. Within a few years, Theomin had established the importing business of David Benjamin and Co. which operated successfully until 1910, and in 1884 he founded the Dresden Piano Company, with branches in the five main centres of New Zealand and sub-branches in every important town. ⁷⁰

Theomin further diversified in the 1880s, by joining the firm of Michaelis, Hallenstein and Farquhar, which traded in grindery and which developed the Glendermid Tannery at Sawyers Bay ⁷¹. An active member of the Jewish Congregation and a man of considerable prominence, Theomin enjoyed long association with many organisations including the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce of which he was President, 1900-02. Aged fifty-one, successful and well established, Theomin decided to build a house commensurate with his position.

Quite how he came to commission George and Yeates is unclear. Theomin was a lover of the arts and an enthusiastic, if somewhat eclectic collector, who was long active in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society ⁷². Described as having 'an ability and keenness of intellect' and an 'outstanding personality', he was a gifted, cultured, genial man ⁷³. His wife shared his artistic interests as his daughter was to do later. ⁷⁴ George might have been recommended

personally to Theomin through artistic circles, or it is possible that the client, with his discernment in matters of art and architecture, had seen and admired work by the partnership, when visiting England. This is probable since the Theomins were to retain links with England. Dorothy Michaelis (1889-1966), their only daughter, was educated in Dunedin, but later at Roedean.

According to New Zealanders, the house is the embodiment of a way of life for the successful few in the first hundred years of New Zealand as a nation, 1840-1940; the Residency, Waitangi, and Mansion House at Kawan Island, being amongst the first, and Olveston being the last and most splendid. The phase passed with the depression of the 1930s and World War II.

Jacobean in general style, ^(Pl.386) the high Dutch gables, occasional battlements, turrets, windows and facades evoke a number of features of architecture of the periods of Charles I and II, appropriately the style in vogue in England at the time of Abel Tasman's discovery of New Zealand in 1642.

The house has four storeys at the back, north ^(Pl.387) and three in front, south ^(Pl.387) and while an indigenous note is engendered by the solid brick walls being rendered with warm, brown Moeraki gravel with some facings in Oamaru stone, the house is nevertheless strongly reminiscent of George's work in England, in terms of the picturesque groupings of gables and tower, details of fenestration and door canopy and rainwater heads. The south and east elevations sport shaped gables of the kind used variously at Poles, Busbridge Hall and elsewhere, while the west and north elevations show the straight gables of the type employed at Batsford and Motcombe. Unusual features are the round, bow bay window of the dining room and the oriel window above the mullioned hall window, both on the south elevation. An intimation of George's continuing interest in Neo-Georgian detailing is given on the west elevation, where a Venetian window opens from the dining room onto a colonnaded patio.

The house, essentially modest in scale for George, having thirty-five rooms, was simple in plan and provision of rooms; the great hall occupying a central position housing staircase and giving access to the dining room, drawing room and library. The service quarters were neatly incorporated along an east/west corridor facing north. It was a compact house for four people, the Theomin's, son Edward and daughter

Dorothy, their guests and servants.

The basement (area of 2,820 sq. ft),^(Pl.389) housed store rooms, wine cellar,^(Pl.390) laundry and furnace room. The ground floor (5,090 sq. ft), comprised reception hall, great hall, drawing and dining rooms, guest suite and library as well as kitchen and scullery. The first floor (3,920 sq. ft),^(Pl.391) gave provision for entertainment and sleeping, upper hall and gallery,^(Pl.391) billiard room, Persian card and music room, and upstairs writing and sitting room, opening onto a terrace above the patio. The top floor (1,910 sq. ft),^(Pl.389) housed servants quarters.

Clearly designed in accordance with the contemporary Edwardian pursuit of 'modern comfort', the house had central heating, (housed directly below and thus heating the kitchen), electric light (originally from a private plant); house intercommunicating telephones, between gallery, main bedroom, kitchen, basement and attic; a house service lift through its four storeys and a light and airy kitchen and scullery, the latter with a service window through which provisions and deliveries were passed, thus breaking with tradition in having no outside door. The kitchen included an impressive range with three fires, made by the Eagle Range Company, enabling three positions of operation, fast, medium and slow and with an oven with a thermometer for pastry, with two doors, one transparent and made of mica. There was also a range of labour saving devices, including a bean slicer and marmalade shredder. Many of the domestic luxuries emanated from England. Documents reveal that the hand lift was prepared to designs by Archibald Smith and Stevens, of London and Manchester; the oak work in the hall was English and supplied by Messrs Green and Abbott of London,⁷⁵ otherwise local tradesmen were patronised. One disadvantage of the plan, however, must have been the long route, either by the hall or the library, from the kitchen to the dining room.

The hall, 20' high and of two storeys was unusual for George in that it was quite intimate in scale and was lit by a flat, mullioned window which admitted a considerable amount of light. With its upper gallery, with flat, wide arches, leading to the upstairs sitting room and bedrooms, it provided an excellent setting for Theomin's collection of paintings, furniture and objets d'art. The wide, open arcaded oak staircase, prefabricated and shipped from England, was very restrained decoratively, but the arrangement, with half landing and open arcades was one favoured by George, notably at 52 Cadogan Square, where the

space was more restricted, the decoration more elaborate, but the arrangement the same.

Other characteristic features included a wooden shuttered Juliet window from which guests in the Persian Card room might look down on festivities in the hall; a mullioned hall window, with lead lights bearing the emblem of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, a restrained Jacobean fireplace in the hall. The dining room, oak throughout, continues the Jacobean theme, with a characteristic oak fireplace with carved Elizabethan figures. The bow window with seats was a new departure for George, and was both practical and attractive. ^(Pl.392) The central heating being cleverly concealed inside the seat, and air ducts ensuring that the windows did not steam up. Similar ingenuity was displayed in the double windows of the first floor bathroom (one of four in the house), the outer opened for ventilation, while the inner half windows prevented draughts.

While some features of Olveston hark back to George's earlier work, others, such as the Venetian window/door of the dining room, ^(Pl.393) the decoration of the drawing room (with its lead lights featuring Jan Van Eyck, Durer, Raphael, Reynolds, Chaucer, Shakespeare and Tennyson, and its light plaster ceiling), the delightful upstairs sitting room, with south-west aspect and door opening on to the terrace, add a note of Edwardian elegance. The efficiency of the kitchen and overall concern for comfort, underlies George's interest in 'modern' aspects of domestic planning and provision, evident particularly at Crathorne Hall (1903-06).

Theomin clearly wished to surround himself with pieces of excellence, brought from his travels all over the world. Examples of Jacobean, Spanish and Japanese art jostle for supremacy with designs by William Morris, such as the interesting Edwardian reading chair, the embossed imitation leather wall paper in both the library and the dining room and a fine comfortable rocker. The fact that the house has an air of miscellany appears to be more the fault of the client than of the architect. It would seem evident that Theomin was mindful of his origins and wished to perpetuate his English connections both in the contents and decoration, as well as style of his house. In selecting George he was assured of being furnished with a design which was predominantly English - making concessions to the locality, only in terms of the

choice and employment of some indigenous materials. This had also been the case in George and Peto's design for the villa for the Gaekwar of Baroda in India (1893), where they made only slight concessions to local trade.

George and Yeates were to execute further works abroad, in Greece, British Guiana, India and Nairobi.

Eynsham Hall, Witney, Oxfordshire (1904-08)

While Crathorne Hall was in progress, George and Yeates designed Eynsham Hall, Witney, Oxfordshire. This design, for their last large country house, saw a return to the more familiar Elizabethan style.

A letter of enquiry to the present owner, Michael Mason, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, elicited the following reply ⁷⁶,

'Your letter about Sir Ernest George rather intrigues me. Yes, he designed and oversaw the building of Eynsham Hall and I have long thought he should have been tarred and feathered for it.

The house it replaced was a dignified, handsome and quite big Georgian house, built about 1785, with most of the character I suppose of houses of that date. My grandfather lived there till he died in 1903, having bought it and the estate in the middle of the last century.

My father, entirely at my mother's instigation, then pulled the old house down, and with the help of this fellow George, erected the soul-less barrack Eynsham Hall now is.

This makes my mother sound like some profiteer's daughter, who wanted to live in a Palace. Actually, she was the daughter of a Scottish Earl, the 26th of his line, whose family had long been notable by their devotion to the higher arts. Still, women are queer cattle and my mother was very unpredictable.

George, I only remember vaguely as a very small man, with a short grey beard and a silly way of walking who did not know how to speak to children. I was very young but already observant and have a good memory.

The house itself is very big, built of a hideous yellow oolite, very roomy inside, beastly cold and entirely without charm or character. It isn't even comfortable. For instance, the only room in the house where the space before the fireplace is not directly between the windows and the door is my mother's boudoir. So you sat before the fire in a blizzard of draught. To make the situation more paradoxical, my mother was never happy unless she was in a draught and the colder the better. So she spent a lot of time rushing round all the rooms opening all the doors and windows. Especially my father's sitting room - next to hers. He liked heat and considered that air was best out of doors. He would wait a couple of minutes or so and then get up and quietly shut everything again. They lived together as mutually adoring man and wife for 35 years.

Anyway there it is. Eynsham Hall is only fitted to be a barrack and now it is one. It will remain so at least for my few remaining years.

George's partner, Yeates, I saw something of in later years. His recreations were skating and collecting pewter. He remained a bachelor and I believe lived to a great age (perhaps that is why). Whether he was a good architect or not I do not know, but he cannot have been as bad as George'.

A second letter concludes the account,

'Thank you for your nice letter of the 10th. I am glad my not very laudatory remarks were some help, even if they horrified you. I am left wondering how and why an obviously intelligent woman like yourself should be spending time finding out about such a disasterous old nincompoop as Sir Ernest George. One thing I am sure of, thinking it over after hearing from you, and that is how he got his knighthood. Dear old Queen Victoria'a taste was - to be polite, questionable. She wanted to knight that awful doggeral mongrel Martin Tupper. I feel sure he must have designed a new Town Hall for somewhere like Gravesend or Southsea. It looked like an Italian Warehouse, but Her Majesty thought it lovely and knighted him, I'll bet even money it is still there and that it is quite properly used as an Italian Warehouse. Of course, it would be easy for you to see Eynsham Hall, if you really want to. It is now a Police Training Centre which suits it well'. 77

The 'new' Eynsham Hall, designed 1904-08, by George and Yeates for James Francis Mason (1861-1929), stood on the site of, and replaced an earlier Eynsham Hall, designed by Charles Barry for the 5th Earl of Macclesfield in 1843. In 1862 after the death of the Dowager Countess of Macclesfield, the estate was sold to James Mason (1824-1903), a mining engineer and amateur scientist of some considerable distinction. He was the natural son ⁷⁸ of a well known family, but was brought up as the elder child of the widow of an architect in Essex, whose name he assumed, presumably George Mason, father of William Mason, the first New Zealand architect. Mason attended the Sorbonne and was apparently still there during the revolution of 1848, but soon afterwards he became the manager of some iron mines in Bilbao in Spain, where he chanced to learn of derelict copper mines in Southern Spain, previously worked by the Romans. He visited the mines, together with others across the border in Portugal. Eventually, he obtained a concession from the Portuguese government to work the Sao Domingos mine in partnership with his friend, Francis Tress Barry. The mine, which remained in their possession until the 1880s, yielded copper from which they made a fortune.

Using his engineering knowledge to design pumping machines and equipment for the mines' railway system, Mason turned the mine into a profitable undertaking. His partner, Barry, organised the shipping and marketing, while Mason took personal charge of the mine, where he

remained until 1879, when his only son James Francis, succeeded him. The mine produced iron and sulphur as well as copper, the latter becoming eventually, only a valuable by-product.

By 1865, Mason had accumulated a considerable fortune which increased still further during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, when the demand for iron and sulphur rose sharply. In 1862 he purchased a part of the Eynsham Park Estate, with the intention of pursuing his agricultural experiments. Additional ground was bought, principally from the Harcourts, in order to extend the estate to 10,000 acres. Mason's grandson maintains that mining was, for James Mason, simply a means to becoming a landowner, entirely in accordance with what Girouard calls,

'The merger between business and land . . . Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, anyone who wanted to be accepted as a full member of the upper classes had to cut all his links with business. He had not only to cease working in his office or warehouse but to give up any financial state in it. He had to reinvest the money in land'. 79

Mason's partner, Francis Tress Barry was to build St Leonard's Hall, a lavish house, near Windsor, Berkshire in 1875, to the designs of C.H.Howell. The exterior was full of nouveau riche ebullience, combining steep and fancy French roofs with an Italiante tower, of the type favoured by Charles Barry. St Leonard's was arguably one of the most successful designs in this style, combining a cheerfully extravagant exterior with a professionally organised plan.

Mason, in the other hand had inherited a house with his estate. Usually described as having been built for the 5th Earl of Macclesfield in 1843 by Sir Charles Barry, it is likely that Barry, as so often, remodelled the earlier house, dating from c.1785. As he left it, it had north and south fronts of nine bays each, the middle five of two storeys and the two bay ends of three storeys. The north front had a projecting porch, and the south front a grand portico of six Ionic columns, with the Macclesfield arms in the pediment. Otherwise the house was rather minimal Italiante though the skyline was enlivened by tall chimneystacks at the corners. Mason showed no inclination to replace the house, probably preferring to devote his energies to his experiments in agricultural science, the planting of many new trees of foreign origin on the estate and the design of an artificial lake for irrigation and a domestic water supply. However in 1872 he commissioned

Owen Jones to lay out new gardens and terraces around the house with carefully arranged colours and forms in flower beds and lawns. Plans exist for the extensive conservatories, built onto the library of the old house. Jones also designed decoration, carpets, hangings and furniture for the dining room, drawing room, music room and billiard room. Some of this survives in the 'Owen Jones Bedroom and Dressing Room'. In addition, four chairs, a circular table, a dressing table and a small gilt and enamel dish are in the V & A. This very striking furniture is decorated with linear inlays.

James Mason died in 1903, when his only son James Francis (1861-1929) was forty-two. James Jnr, had been to Eton and as well as being Chairman of Mason & Barry, he was a director of the Great Western Railway and other companies. In 1895 he married Lady Evelyn Lindsay, daughter of the 26th Earl of Crawford and Balcarres. From 1906 to 1918 he was Conservative MP for Windsor. He was also Conde de Pomarão in Portugal. His favourite sports were hunting and shooting.

Plans for rebuilding Eynsham were clearly afoot as early as 1903⁸⁰ as evidenced by correspondence between George and Yeates and J.F.Mason's private secretary, Hon. Henry Parker. Mason, it would seem, lived with his wife in Freeland House (rebuilt 1890), but gave it up to his mother after his father's death and so had to live at Eynsham Hall. Writing to George he explained,

'As I have been unable to get the small house in Freeland⁸¹ I have decided to give up my house to my mother soon. This will necessitate my finding one for myself in any case, and therefore the somewhat indecent haste re. building becomes unnecessary, it naturally goes against the grain for sentimental reasons.

I have therefore determined to go into Eynsham for a time and postpone operations for say, a year, I shall thus be able to take plenty of time to thoroughly study the whole scheme. We shall be able to take it up after a time where it now stands, the general plan we have is I think excellent, when in the house, I can more fully consider the details. If you have my plans of Eynsham first floor, will you kindly let me have it back'.⁸²

In May 1904⁸³ George's design for Eynsham Hall appeared in The Architect (PL 394). It was described in The Building News as 'an extensive and well planned mansion in a Later kind of Elizabethan, with flat roofs and bays carried up through an elaborate parapet'.⁸⁴ The prospect of such a large house being built clearly caused some interest in the Royal

Academy and The Builder commented,

'Of the larger houses to be seen, few are entirely new conceptions the greater number representing enlargement of existing mansions; and in almost every case no idea is given of the former condition of the places, and consequently no adequate opinion is to be formed of the design, for which the exhibitor is actually responsible. Foremost in importance is Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire, by Messrs George and Yeates, a large stone house in the Elizabethan manner with an H-shaped plan. The drawing shows two loggias open to the terrace between the wings, reminiscent of Holland House and Bramshill'. 85

and used already by George at Shiplake Court (1889-91).

While George and Yeates's design was in no way an extension of the Barry House, the relationship between the two can be clearly seen, in two early plans by George. (Pls 395 & 396) Original foundations might have been used and there are references to certain trees having to be taken into account, also a discussion of terrace levels. The new house had clearly been planned before September 1903 although the planning appears to have been kept fluid, since George wrote to Lady Evelyn in October 1904,

'I am very sorry that we find nothing satisfactory among the first studies of the house.

I hoped you would have the early sketches for I am sure I remember making some prettier drawings than the scribblings that we have the pleasure to enclose herewith'. 86

An undated sketch, (Pl.397) possibly one of the preliminary impressions exists, of the north and west elevations, showing a large and elaborate central tower in the centre of the house, an elaborate reminiscence of that at Hatfield House (1108-12). Just as George and Yeates had used the capped towers of the south front of Hatfield as a source for North Myms, they used the south entrance as a basis for that of Eynsham and the bays of the north (entrance) front as a source for the unusual outside staircase tower on the south-west front of Eynsham. This was originally designed with unglazed openings and was set as a fire escape from the nurseries; on it is the foundation stone dated 1904. (Pl.398) Eynsham as a whole appears to have been inspired by Burton Constable Hall, Hull. 87 Two sets of plans exist for the house,

one dated 1904⁸⁸ (Pls 399-405) and the other 1907,⁸⁹ both show an H-plan. Other drawings dated 1904 show sections and elevations.^(Pls 406-415) which accord in general matters of arrangement, the only differences being in detail.^(Pls 416-419) The entrance front, for example, shows George at one time toying with the idea of an entrance porch, rusticated at ground floor level. The unexecuted north elevation shows only four chimney stacks, whereas the completed house sports nine. The existing building is of grey local stone, with dressings of a yellow variety of Tyanton stone.^(Pls 420 & 421) On the entrance front there is a three-storey porch with two orders of Ionic columns.

Throughout the commission, the clients appear to have played an active role. Mason wrote, in June 1904,

'Gentlemen, I have consulted Lady Evelyn, we have decided to retain glazed bricks in the basement - Lady Evelyn will call today with regard to abolishing the fresh air chamber as she thinks if this is done she would like some form of ventilation to the radiators. I will, however, leave her to discuss this with you more fully...'

Mason also comments,

'I think that a considerable saving might be made, without detriment to the building, by bargaining with the contractor for less perfect walling especially for gun room and kitchen wings and the East and generally where the weight is not so great. I conclude then, that I have accepted the following economies',

he encourages a

'certain amount of Hanboro' stone, and a less somewhat extravagant walling should result in a greater saving than had been allowed in this estimate, also that the abolition of the basement under the Estate office wing should probably save more than £200'.⁹⁰

The 1904 ground plans^(Pl.402) reveal a small entrance porch leading to a corridor, which acted as a hall, although the main staircase and hall proper, with their fine oak carving are situated to the east of the entrance. The principal rooms, boudoir, drawing room, library and dining room face south. Provision for a large estate office was made to the north west, in connection with J.F.Mason's business room, the Hon.Henry Parker's room, with its panelling from

the old house and the Parker crest on the overmantel, small games room and strong room. On 1 September 1906 Henry Parker wrote to George on Mason's behalf,

'I suspect Mr Stephens has told you that I want shelves like those in the strong room at Blenheim, skeleton iron. The shelves should be wide enough for big deed boxes and possibly those at Blenheim are too narrow'. 91

The business room had access to the outside staircase, leading to Mason's dressing room. The other 'male' preserves, the billiard room and gun rooms were all situated in the north-east wing. The boudoir featured as a rather isolated female preserve, occupied the south-east corner, having its only access to the corridor by a south-west passage which, together with its own east facing loggia, gave an air of sheltered intimacy. (Pls 422 & 423) One of the most interesting elements of the house plan is the fact that service areas were in the basement with the butler occupying the north east section (back and front), and the housekeeper north-west. A servery, with lift and stairs were convenient for the dining room and the kitchen extended from the basement to ground floor, allowing clerestory windows. As a result the domestic offices were luxurious in terms of space, occupying as they did, the entire basement, except the north-west wing below the offices, originally planned as coal cellars. First and second floor plans (Pls 403 & 404) reveal that the Hon. Henry Parker had a resident valet and was clearly a valued personal secretary and friend. Parker (1860-1952), was the 10th son of the 6th Earl of Macclesfield, described by Michael Mason as

'my father's best and most devoted friend - 'the thousandth man', from the day that they went to Eton together and were neighbours on a much defaced bench. Neighbourhood in Oxfordshire was coincidental. In later years he became my fathers Private Secretary and was my 'Uncle Harry'. 92

Decoratively, the interiors show a desire to recapture the Jacobean spirit, evident in the dining room fireplace and doors and particularly in the carving of the hall and staircase (Pl.424) (Pls 425 & 426). William Frith is recorded in the account book as providing and working additional masonry, billiard room chimney piece £83.15s., upper part of grand chimneypiece in plaster. Frith had taught at the Vauxhall

Schools in London (opened 1861). Many leading sculptors were trained under him and Jules Dalou - among them George Tinworth who worked for Doultons and designed and executed work at Woolpits (1885-88). Frith had worked for J.L. Pearson at the latter's Elizabethan style Astor Estate Office (1892-93, completed 1895), Temple Gardens, London, carving the great marble chimney piece bearing the names of the Astor family. J. Starkie Gardner, another of George's craftsmen also worked on the commission. Frith worked for Astor at Hever Castle, on the extensions by Frank Pearson of 1903-06. The half panelled corridor with its strapwork ceiling continues in the style of North Myms, Cawston and Motcombe, while the more classical door frames of the library were probably intended to accord with the mahogany bookcases and the chimney piece from the 1785 house, they nevertheless reflect George and Yeates's move towards contemporary classicizing trends in interior design, also manifest in Crathorne Hall. The room also had two green and white marble chimney pieces and green brocade wall covering. Correspondence suggests that some of the fabric of the old hall was reused elsewhere. In July 1906, re. Secretary's room, Parker wrote,

'Lady Evelyn has received a plan for the panelling of one side of the room only, she would like plans of the remaining sides and would like to know if there is enough of the old panelling to complete or whether some new would have to be added'. 93

The Masons, particularly Lady Evelyn, had firm opinions. George apparently tried ⁹⁴ to insist upon leaded windows, for their picturesque authenticity, but Lady Evelyn would not countenance them and since she and her husband were footing the bill, their opinion prevailed. 27 August 1906. Parker wrote, quoting a telegram from Mason,

'To confirm wire sent this day. Rhodes reports that oak floors are going down too quick, as we do not go into the house till November, I hope no risk will be run. Mason' 95

Mason, 2 September 1907,

'In proposed entrance for opening gates is rendered impossible by the fact that they cannot be opened any other way and therefore if anyone arrives from without, unseen, they could not enter. The lighting of the forecourt by electricity had better, I think, be abandoned - no permanent standards would be possible as they would resemble a Tea Garden and therefore, when entertaining, oil

lamps on poles would be erected. The one light over the gate would so rarely be used, that, I think this also might be abolished, if it were the station road it would be different, but this, and most night work would be from the south. I will write shortly about iron gates. Of course you will send us detailed proposals'. 96

The Masons moved into Eynsham in November 1906, it was to cost £77,243. 19s9d. on the final settlement of all claims in September 1908, when all work was completed. George and Yeates received a total of £4,500. 9s2d. on 14 September 1908. On 23 November 1910 they received a further £71. 9s. 3d. for 'extra work'

Correspondence dated 18 May 1905 reveals

'The motor shall meet Mr Yeates and Mr Stephens Oxford 10.15 am Monday next. Unless Mr Yeates would prefer to come down on Sunday 3.20pm arriving Oxford 5.10pm. Perhaps he will let me know'. 97

It would seem likely that George continued to make the aesthetic judgments and obviously made appearances on site, but Alfred Yeates, like Harold Peto, was responsible for much of the day to day handling of affairs.

While Eynsham Hall witnessed a return to the more familiar Jacobean vocabulary after the more unusual Neo-Georgian at Crathorne Hall, there is nevertheless, a loss of intimacy. The sum of the various elements creates a rather cavernous atmosphere, as opposed to the warmth and intimacy of Stoodleigh Court, Woolpits, Shiplake Court or Poles. Eynsham lacks the spontaneity of the earlier works. Crathorne Hall is spared this fate, in that the style is a sudden novelty in the pattern of George and Yeates's country house work, and furthermore, any austerity could be excused as according perfectly with the feel of the surrounding countryside of North Yorkshire. Eynsham witnesses the laboured rendering and dilution of stylistic elements used earlier with enthusiasm and conviction. While the entrance front is rather bleak and forbidding and the scale of rooms overpowering, the garden front is more successful. The rooms must have been far more inviting when properly furnished. There is, as always, evidence of an astonishingly high standard of craftsmanship and materials.

George and Yeates were to execute works in 1913-15 for J.F. Mason at 16 Bruton Street, London, which Lady Evelyn appears to have used as a home for officers during the war years.

CHAPTER 8: LONDON COMPETITIONS AND COMMISSIONS

London in the Early 1900s

'Metropolitan reconstruction has already begun in earnest. The first phase has been entered. Demolition of old tumble down and insanitary property has been going on behind the Strand on the north side for some time, and in a short period, we may begin to see the erection of a portion of the new frontage'. 1

Thus begins the Editorial in the Building News, April 1901, entitled 'Municipal and Monumental Design', a subject which was emerging at the centre of professional and public debate in this, the year of Edward VII's accession, London, described as a 'wen' by Cobbett, in the early years of Victoria's reign, was, by 1891, according to Lord Rosebery,

'a tumour - an elephantiasis sucking into its gorged system half the life, and the blood and the bone of the rural districts'. 2

While Rosebery drew attention to rural depopulation, others were becoming increasingly concerned about the appalling consequences for the capital, exacerbated by a lack of general administrative control or structure.

As an attempt to ameliorate urban chaos, and all that it implied with regard to lack of adequate sanitation and reasonable conditions, the Metropolitan Board of Works had been set up in 1855, in the hope that even limited powers might effect an improvement. The results were laudable, by 1865 London's main sewerage system had been completed in six years, and the Board busied itself organising an official fire brigade. Urban issues attracted considerable attention from a variety of quarters, and concurrent with the earnest and pioneering efforts to deal with the most pressing wrongs, less utilitarian voices urged for something more ambitious by way of city planning.

Throughout the nineteenth century Nash's Regent Street remained unchallenged as an achievement in architectural coherence. Victorian attempts at emulation were thwarted at every turn by the Board's lack of legislative power. Difficulties surrounding compulsory purchase, displacement and rehousing marred early attempts at street planning. The pre-Metropolitan Board of Works Victoria Street in Westminster was laid out in 1845-51, while the Metropolitan Board of Works, Victoria Embankment dated from 1864-70, and Queen Victoria Street in the City, from 1867-71. Such achievements, however, relied more upon accidental opportunities, completed leases, demolition and the erection of public offices, than coherent planning. Shaftesbury Avenue, 1877-86, and its successor, Charing Cross Road, were examples of having largely

to follow old street lines. The demolition of Northumberland House had provided a unique opportunity, c.1874, to drive a new road through to the new embankment, but architecturally the opportunity was missed, and the results repented at leisure.³

While the Metropolitan Board of Works wrestled with the consequences of maladministration, wider principles of urban and rural planning were being considered and debated amongst the newly emerging professional town planners in England and Europe. Josef Stübben's Der Stadtebau, appeared in 1890 and Camillo Sitte's, Der Stadtebau nach Seinen Künstler ischen Grundsätzen, in 1889. Sitte, in his immensely influential book, analysed old European towns, and from their apparently random plans, extracted basic principles of harmonious town-planning. The first edition of Ebenezer Howard's seminal work, Tomorrow, a Peaceful Path to Real Reform (1898)⁴ gave impetus to the radical garden city movement.

Municipal authorities in England, however, were accused of remaining undecided as to whether streets should have a formal or irregular character. While both could be recommended on certain counts, formality was conducive 'to dignity of character and unity' and was favoured since, 'A long spacious thoroughfare always commands the highest ground rents, and attracts buildings of architectural pretensions'.⁵ Nevertheless 'picturesqueness' was not to be undervalued. It was concluded by some, that 'irregularity bases itself on a temporary use, but formality on a more permanent use'.⁶

In accusing the Municipal authorities of not having studied the question of planning in the abstract, critics of London's development invoked civic planning precedents, pointing in particular to Paris and the authoritarian achievements of Napoleon III,

'The places and boulevards of Paris are typical of the State and municipal control, and are of that formal type of design of which we have too little in London'.⁷

The superiority of French civic architecture and planning was clearly apparent to those who visited the International Exhibitions of 1867, 1878, 1889, and above all, 1900. The admiration of Haussmann's Paris, expressed by visitors, chimed with an awakening, on the part of a growing number of architects, to French achievements and methods. France had her enlightened and faithful supporters in the nineteenth century, but they were few and far between. The lone voices of Richard Phene Spiers and William White, had delivered papers to the RIBA as early as 1884, advocating the French system. Spiers, a Master at the RA, began to gather supporters amongst those who

were inured to, and jaded by, the vagaries of stylistic revivals. The intransigent Beaux-Arts system began to appear virtuous, its disciplined training nurtured uniformity, counteracting the variety of picturesque approaches which some felt veiled ineptitude. Beaux Arts influence was to extend in several different architectural spheres: in the style of individual buildings, in education and not least in an interest in 'monumental planning'.

By 1901, the Building News was lamenting

'We can show very little of monumental as a particular expression of the architectural mind in the Metropolis'. 8

Achievements to date in London were indeed derisory and amounting to a catalogue of lost opportunities. Trafalgar Square, 'at the centre of Metropolitan traffic and life',⁹ had no coherence and only two buildings of interest, St Martin's by Gibbs, and the National Gallery by Wilkins. Elsewhere, buildings were crowded together with no preconceived plan and styles were at complete variance. It was suggested that any one of the conglomerate of the costly City and Guilds Institute, Imperial Institute, School of Music and Natural History Museum, would have been worthy of the unique site by the Horticultural Gardens.

A fine street might have been planned from Charing Cross to the Houses of Parliament, which were 'well in line' and

'A noble focus or centre could have been formed by bringing Whitehall and the Victoria Embankment together on the west side of Westminster Bridge, and thus making the Houses of Parliament the centre object of attention'. 10

In 1901, Whitehall was considered to be in 'a chaotic condition', large areas in the east side still unfilled, the existing buildings appearing 'fragmentary'.¹¹ The Building News questioned with anguish,

'Imagine what might have been produced if Whitehall on the east side had extended to the Embankment, and had been laid out with gardens, as if Inigo Jones's contemplated palace had been carried out'. 12

Against such a background, it was hardly surprising that great hopes were to centre round the burst of urban planning which accompanied Edward VII's accession. Many official and unofficial schemes for Metropolitan London were proposed; many were fraught, and mauled by the demands of unchecked forces of property and commerce. George was invited to participate in two planning schemes, both surrounded by

intense public interest. He was to enjoy little success in either. Although constantly credited with having improved the quality of London's streets with his individual works, George's love of the picturesque appears to have militated against a firm commitment to, and success in, monumental design and planning, just as it had marred his individual exercises in classicism. Not that he was insensitive to the value of harmony; admiring the Regent Quadrant, he acknowledged,

'It is at the sky-line that the beauty of the curve or sweep of the Circus can be appreciated, and this line can only be preserved by the following of one design'. 13

Nor was he naive. Nash, said George, had a simple problem to solve when dealing with only two storeys above the ground floor, with increased land values demanding five or six stories in height and another two in the roof, 'monotonous repetition of parts was inevitable'. 14

George's two competition entries reveal that he was prepared to subscribe to the prevailing taste of classicism, and in this respect parallel his individual exercises, discussed in Chapter 6.

The Strand/Holborn Scheme (1900)

The Westminster Improvement Scheme of 1898¹⁵ (a private scheme hatched by a consortium of politicians, stockbrokers and gentry, disapproved by the London County Council, the successor to the Metropolitan Board of Works from 1889), served as a fairly effective deterrent to would-be speculators, and ensured the London County Council's position as principal agent of any metropolitan scheme. The London County Council, of recent inception, combined the pragmatic approach of the Metropolitan Board of Works with new plenary powers, and was, from the outset an administrative success. Furthermore, it drew on two different factions for support, the dignitaries who supported the transformation of London into an imperial capital, and the Fabians and radicals¹⁶ who hoped for a just and efficient system of local government, this dichotomy was to reveal itself in the work of the Architects' Department in the years before the First World War.

From the outset, both groups worked in accord, but their lack of experience in matters of central city improvements rendered their first venture a fiasco. The project involved a much needed new main street from the Strand to Holborn, with an extension to Russell Square; the

street (subsequently Kingsway), was to link Waterloo Bridge with Holborn, in an effort to improve the abominable north-south communications. Despite its being an early and pressing concern of the London County Council, the scheme was deferred until 1898. The problem of positioning was a difficult one. The junction of the new road with the Strand needed to align, not only with the Bridge, but also with the position of the churches of St Clement Dane's and St Mary-le-Strand. The plan, published in 1898, proposed a bifurcation of the street, to form a sizeable triangle around St Mary-le-Strand. This was agreed in consultation with the RIBA. The triangle was transmuted into a segment, in 1899, with the divided road following the lines of the present Aldwych, which was to be developed first. Once publicised, the problem prompted a series of proposals by various architects, which were publicised in the Architectural Review, 1899-1900.¹⁷ Shaw, who shared the opinion of many, that the segmental road was unsatisfactory, designed the division to enclose a square.

Early in 1900, the London County Council Improvements Committee ambitiously agreed upon a competition between eight architects to design the Strand/Aldwych facades. The competition was handled incompetently.¹⁸ The final list, half chosen by the RIBA and half by the London County Council and agreed in June 1900, included George; also Blomfield, Flockhart, Hare, Macartney, Mountford, Stokes and Runtz.¹⁹ Shaw was to share the assessing with W.E.Riley.²⁰ The designs, submitted by October 1900, showed nearly all the architects to have chosen an English Renaissance style. George created a large space in the centre of the segmental island facing the Strand and fronting St Mary's Church. In the centre he positioned a large public building, flanked by colonnaded entrances, with courts behind. To the west, a wing with an arch in it for access to the courtyard, was treated as a colonnade above. Further to the west was Short's wine house, and the New Gaiety Theatre occupied the corner, with a rounded angle. The Morning Post new offices, occupied an isolated, triangular block, with recessed columnar loggias on the first storey. Palladian in style, the offices were positioned on the opposite side of the crescent road. A similar arrangement was proposed at the east horn of the crescent.

While the plan was acceptable enough, the elevations were considered,

'so very poor, considering the reputation of the author who has done so much good architectural work'. 21

(Pls 429 & 430)

The Strand front, while considered to be 'very harmonious and well-

balanced in general lines of composition',²² and 'handled with taste'²³, when examined in detail, was found to be tame classic, with orders in which the columns were too attenuated, and 'hampered by a commonplace severity'.²⁴ The Builder considered it 'looked like a front of a museum rather than street architecture'²⁵. The Building News drew attention to the central, Palladian block, which

'notwithstanding its well-posed uniformity and picturesque harmony, belonged rather to a Domestic type of building, with spiritless detail and odd proportions'. 26

The handling of the New Gaiety Theatre was also criticised,

'We cannot admire the superimposed orders to the Gaiety, where the smaller attic storey has an order of columns out of scale to the larger order below. This want of scale between the orders and the height of block somewhat destroys the relation between the main Strand blocks'. 27

While the south side of the crescent was relieved by rusticated piers and a Corinthian order in centre and wings, the north side,^(Pls 429 & 430) providing shops, was broken by slight projections in the centre and at the ends, with curved pediments to the former. The new Holborn Road was flanked by cupolas.

The Building News commended George's acknowledgement and placing of the chimneys, since, 'Most of the designs ignored such necessary adjuncts'.²⁸ This was a legacy from George's domestic designing, where chimneys invariably played an important rôle in the composition, regardless of the scale of the house, or of the style in which he was working. It is not insignificant that arguably the most successful part of the Strand/Holborn design recalled domestic work, but in so doing, rendered the design inappropriate. The problem was to bedevil George; he seemed incapable of making a clear definition between the domestic and monumental, and was therefore incapable of powerfully orchestrating any urban scheme of large dimensions. Shaw and Riley chose designs by Hare, Flockhart and Macartney, in that order.

In his Opening address as President of the RIBA in 1908, George lamented,

'We must always regret the opportunity lost in the Strand, the County Council having taken expert advice on a grand scheme for rebuilding that quarter of the town, a scheme which was allowed to die a natural death. My personal feeling is against the rigid following of a set elevation through the length of a street. We do not wish to see London 'Hausmannised'. Violent diversity should be avoided, while the cornices and leading lines of buildings should be taken up where practicable'. 29

It was adherence to such principles which cost George his next competition success.

The Queen Victoria Memorial and Remodelling of the Mall (1901-13)

Even in the event of the Strand/Aldwych scheme having been handled with competence, it would still have provided scant opportunity for the full employment of Beaux-Arts principles to create a scheme worthy of the Empire, but in the plans for the Queen Victoria Memorial, advocates of formality and grandeur sensed a chance of triumph. Responding to rumours, the Building News of 1901 seized the opportunity to reinforce the case, declaring the scheme might,

'form a monumental vista or promenade that will vie with those of some of the European capitals. What a grand vista is that now proposed by extending the Mall to Charing Cross, so that Buckingham Palace may be made the Western end of the avenue. Its architectural pretensions, however, as a centre are hardly worthy of a scheme. Such a vista might, indeed, be prolonged into the Strand, if we could only remove a few costly buildings and acquire their sites'. 30

To a certain extent, their hopes were fulfilled, but the scheme was long in completion (1913), and the intentions were to change as the scheme progressed, for a variety of unanticipated reasons.

The Queen Victoria Memorial Committee was appointed in February 1901, the month following the Queen's death. The Executive Committee, under the Secretaryship of Lord Esher, comprised, Lord Windsor, Sir L. Alma-Tadema, Major General Sir Arthur Ellis, A.B. Freeman-Mitford, late of the Office of Works (for whom George and Peto had designed Redesdale Hall in 1887, and Batsford Park in 1888-90, see Chapter 5), and Sidney Colvin. The presence of Sir E. Poynter, President of the Royal Academy, and William Emerson, President of the RIBA was a hopeful indication that sculpture and architecture would be properly considered in the scheme.

In early March 1901, the Committee recommended that 'a memorial be erected in the neighbourhood of the Abbey and the Palace of Westminster, or of Buckingham Palace; the memorial to include as its most prominent feature a statue of the Queen'.³¹

However, the opportunity for greater architectural and scenic change was recognised and seized upon. It was agreed to commission a sculptural monument for the site immediately in front of Buckingham Palace, and the Committee invited five architects to

'prepare designs for the treatment of the western end of the Mall, where the monument itself (in whatever form) is to be placed; and also to submit a general scheme to include an architectural entrance at the Spring Gardens end of the Mall',

as well as

'an architectural rearrangement of the Mall with groups of sculpture at intervals, the whole forming a processional road'.³²

At the same time as the general plan was made known, the Queen Victoria Memorial Fund (which was to elicit subscriptions from all over the Empire), was opened by the Lord Mayor.

The fact that there was no precedent in England for such a combined architectural and sculptural monumentation on this scale, did not pass unnoticed. The Prime Minister, Balfour, explained with confidence that the scheme was 'of a kind of which other nations have shown examples, which we may well imitate and can easily surpass'.³³ The Building News, while admitting that France, Italy, and Austria, 'have surpassed us in the taste and energy displayed in carrying out public improvements',³⁴ contended that the monumental grouping of the Government buildings in Washington, the laying out of the city and proposed Centennial Avenue, by Engineer Pierre Charles L'Enfant might serve as a worthy example. London, 'the richest city in the world', it was counselled, might well, 'emulate the younger cities of the West in learning how to make the best of opportunities offered'.³⁵

There was a consensus that such a grandiose plan was occasioned, but while the scheme, with all its potential elicited the general approval of the press, the proposed method of implementation met with considerable public and professional opposition. The announcement, in early April, to invite only one sculptor, Thomas Brock, and five architects, Dr Rowland Anderson, Sir Thomas Drew, Ernest George, Thomas Jackson, and Aston Webb, was challenged by a flood of letters to the national press demanding an open, rather than limited competition, since the work was of 'such national interest and such great importance'.³⁶

Professional discontent was such that an extraordinary meeting of the RIBA was called.³⁷ Members petitioned the Memorial Committee, without success, recommending a new competition. The effectiveness of their protests, however, was inhibited by the fact that their President served on the Committee, but the most revealing fact to emerge from the *débâcle* was that, according to Emerson, but for his presence on the Committee, a single architect would have been chosen. Fortunately, the appointment of only one sculptor, Thomas Brock (1847-1922), seems to have been

less controversial.

Before the announcement of the winner, many suggestions were rehearsed in the pages of the building press; including a canal à la Taj Mahal, down the Mall. By July, however, Brock had submitted a sketch model of the proposed statue, and both the Committee and the King had examined the various drawings and models, but

'so numerous were the drawings, and so complicated their detail, that not even a tentative selection has been made.' 38

The caution exercised in reaching a final decision was presumably prompted by the disappointing response to the appeal to funds, only £126,250 having been subscribed towards the £250,000 goal. The announcement finally came in the last week of July, that Aston Webb's scheme had been selected and Brock's small scale clay model had been approved, 'subject to such modifications as may be necessitated by the scheme as a whole', 39 anticipated as being minor. Not so the plans of Webb, which were to be subjected to whole series of changes during a long and involved evolution, only completed with his new facade for Buckingham Palace in 1913.

While most commentators approved Webb's general design, Lutyens, the future planner of New Delhi, was to remark in 1902,

'The Queen's Memorial is horrid as far as I have seen it. Aston Webb had got it all inside out and far too small in detail and too funny for words.' 40

Indeed, the almost miscellaneous collection of colonnades, pavilions, formal gardens, fountains and statues, of Webb's original design, far from creating a conducive setting for Brock's sculpture, would have confused the issue, had they not, mercifully, been simplified considerably in execution. 41

Furthermore, not one of the entries embodied virtues of a design, 'at once dignified and monumental', and simple in detail and with those well conceived outlines, 42 that the commentators had hoped would rival such continental schemes. It was as the Building News had feared when it said, 'Are we sure that the highest architectural expression of the age can be secured in the selected architects?' 43

George's design again revealed his insecurity in handling the monumental, and more importantly, it was less practical than many of its competitors. The design involved an ornamental court in front of Buckingham Palace, longer than those proposed by George's colleague. 44 (P1.431) It was carried further eastward into the Mall. A parallelogram, it

terminated eastward in a semi-circle. The monument was to be placed on the centre axis of this court, in a smaller parterre of its own, running lengthways and parallel with the outer screen of the court and terminated at each end by a fountain with circular basin. ^(P1.432) The whole looked rather elongated and 'pinched' from the St James' lake side. ^(P1.433) As might be expected, the quality of architectural design was accomplished - the semicircular screen which bounded the court eastwards, was a double colonnade with domed pavilions at intervals, to the north and south, while the screens were treated simply and gracefully. To the south, at intervals, groups of columns set close together on the corners of a square, carried entablatures and statues based on a projecting rusticated pier in the masonry below; to the north, similar groups were arranged, with a light iron railing between them, about two thirds the height of the shaft. The effects of the screen, with masses of foliage without, would have been most effective, and the formality of the rows of trees would have added to the dignity of the scheme, but the whole effect lacked monumentality. In common with George's other exercises in the grand manner, the design shows an inability to exploit and arrange the features of the style to compose a convincing and dramatic effect. The parts are too disparate and spaced too far apart to invest the sum with arresting impact.

The practical failure of George's plan lay in his handling of traffic, which entered through a central opening facing the monument and fountains, and then divided on each side, the north access leading to an opening into Constitution Hill, the south to an opening in Buckingham Gate. As a result, the traffic, taken inside the monumental court, diverged close to the enclosure railing of the Palace itself, instead of being entirely outside, and therefore further away, as arranged by Webb.

One of the challenges of the scheme was posed at Trafalgar Square, where it was hoped that the Mall would be opened up through Spring Gardens as soon as possible, especially in view of the widening of the Strand, which was by then in progress. This created the problem of the alignment of different axes of the Mall and Spring Gardens. Webb's Triumphant Arch, containing residential and office accommodation for the Admiralty (thus sparing the Memorial Committee erection costs), ⁴⁵ was a solution which had greatly contributed to his success in the competition. The tripartite arch, in an almost Mannerist classical mode, was ingenious, allowing the sides to include two and three floors

respectively, but more importantly, solved the problem of alignment by using two reverse curves. Others had not been so inventive. Both George and Thomas Jackson elected to leave a delta between Whitehall and the real commencement of their processional routes. Sir Thomas Drew also avoided any special treatment of the junction; not content to leave a delta, Drew arranged a forecourt 110' wide, forming a kind of vestibule to the monumental arch and road, a transition between the common road and State route. Considering that one point of the scheme was the opening out of the Mall into Whitehall, it seems odd that three of the five competitors ignored this junction of the two roadways.

George's design was very poor in this respect. His resolution to the west, passing from Whitehall, through the delta, intended to place a monumental arch, with centre and side openings. ^(Pl. 434) It was both graceful and unusual, but arguably less imposing than its competitors, being much lower in proportion. The wings provided archways for the ordinary carriage and pedestrian traffic, while the main central opening, with its tall, massive gates, was reserved for Royalty. The road was treated very simply, with a row of trees on either side, and was 'stopped' to the west of the Duke of York steps and on either side of the opening to Marlborough Gate, by a pedestal placed longitudinally in line with a row of trees.

The public was admitted to St James Palace in November 1901, to view all the submitted designs, and the Building News took up the opportunity of discussing the schemes once again, remarking in hindsight that,

'Some of the unsuccessful designs were more architectural, so far as buildings were concerned; but they in this respect display a far reaching and ambitious limit, never likely to be realised.' 46

and further admitted,

'As a matter of fact, only the part of Mr Webb's design enclosing Mr Brock's statue is proposed to be carried out'. 47

George's design was considered, 'not very remarkable', but then it was argued, 'Mr Ernest George does not come out well in competitions', ⁴⁸ His design, it was reported, included, 'The Queen, stilted up above the other groups,' occupying,

'a position looking up the Mall in front of the central composition, with its elongated columns of the Ionic order and radiating base, where recumbent lions are placed above the steps. Neptune and his bath are seen in the perspective

drawn by the architect himself. In the elevational details the sculpture well put in; but in the sketches the figures are more picturesque than dignified'. 49

George was ever likely to succumb to an 'artistic' solution. His Royal Gate, at the Spring Gardens end of the Mall, was universally admired as 'eminently indicative of its architect's artistic charms in picturesque design', but, 'hardly befits a triumphal road in memory of our great Queen'.⁵⁰ Since it looked relatively unimposing compared with the elevation of the Duke of York's column and Carlton House Terrace, it was deemed more suited 'for a gentleman's park in the country'.⁵¹

The Building News concluded,

'That Mr George's design is graceful and picturesque no one could deny, but as a whole, we think it may fairly be asserted that he has disappointed his admirers'. 52

While George was unsuccessful in this and the Strand/Holborn scheme, he appears to have been well aware of the issues implicit in such planning, and he felt keenly the capital's lost opportunities and previous errors. In his Opening Address as President of the RIBA in November 1908, he remarked,

'I remember the discussion that preceded the forming of Northumberland Avenue, . . . A street was set out with dignified width to take tall houses; but these after running for two hundred yards cease. A view across the river would have given a certain interest; but by perversity, this important road leads only to the skew side of an iron railway bridge, a signal post being the chief feature in the vista. It is to avoid similar accidents that we are vigilant'. 53

While there were laws controlling sanitation, safety, fire precaution, George argued,

'there is no law to protect us from monstrosities, and our sense of beauty may be constantly wounded, much as the senses are pained by street music and by the voice and stench of motors'. 54

Mindful of both the frustration felt by the RIBA at his inability to exercise authority in such matters, and the difficulties in avoiding dictation from mere official judgement and prejudice, George argued,

'Among ourselves we might have a Consultative Committee of three or four men of judgment, to whom, as a matter of grace, designs would be shown, with adjoining buildings

indicated. Errors of taste could thus be pointed out before being committed to stone'. 55

The French example was invoked once again,

'In great Public Works such consultation would be valuable, and in France we find leading men working in unison to the advantage of their art'. 56

Rebuilding, which never ceases, should be, he contended

'part of one well-devised scheme anticipating the ever-increasing needs of a growing population. We might then have some day direct routes from east to west and north to south, fine approaches to our public buildings, and ready access to our parks and open spaces. New suburbs developed should be the result of forethought, instead of growing, as now, beneath the wand of the jerrybuilder.' 57

Since the Local Government Board were framing town planning legislation⁵⁸ it was felt appropriate that the RIBA should request 'specific permission' to make representations and recommendations at Board inquiries, before the approval of town planning schemes.

'We are all interested in the humanitarian side of this subject, but, as architects, we only ask to offer advice from the aesthetic or architectural point of view; endeavouring that new streets shall give fine vistas, being considered in relation to the public buildings or churches which they may pass in their route or to which they may lead. The placing of public monuments and the laying-out of parks and their approaches are all matters about which judgment from the artistic side is essential'. 59

George recognised the Queen Victoria Memorial and remodelling of the Mall as a fine opportunity. In 1908, the entire scheme had yet to be completed.

'The Arch of Decimus Burton on Constitution Hill should gain by the promised gift of a fine sculptured group. We look forward to seeing at an early date the Processional Road making its way through the triple arches by which the architect has skilfully disguised the twist in the road which joins it with Trafalgar Square. It will cease to be the restful retreat that it forms now, but I trust it will never be profaned by tramways or motorbuses. The Londoner must preserve some haven where he may possess his soul in peace'. 60

Such naivety might be said to account for George's placing of the Mall so close to Buckingham Palace.

Since many were of the opinion that any chosen scheme would be greatly enhanced were Buckingham Palace to be either rebuilt or refaced, Webb was further employed in 1912. The task was not easy. The old east frontage was a rather heavy handling of early Victorian classical forms by Edward Blore, which served to close off the side of Nash's palace courtyard, and funds did not allow Webb to indulge the pleas for a dignified and ample palace commensurate with the intended scheme. Instead, he was bound to take account, not only of Nash's restrained classicism, but also Blore's fenestration. Furthermore, since the palace contained a very fine suite of rooms it was stipulated that there were to be no internal changes. Webb also had to consider suggestions from the new King George V. The final result, executed in an astonishingly swift thirteen weeks was a delicate, but insufficiently strong handling of French inspired dix-huitieme style.

Acknowledged from the outset as a chance to rival Europe, there is no doubt that the overall scheme, triumphal arch, boulevard, rond point and palace front, constituted a distinguished achievement, 'the first example in recent times of town planning in the Metropolis'.⁶¹ Its restraint, however, might, in hindsight, owe more to the financial restrictions than a calculated reticence. It had taken twelve years to complete, by which time a perceptible change in architectural taste, towards a less vigorous Neo-Georgian mood and French classicism, could be detected in the years after Edward VII's death.

The London County Council's New County Hall Competition (1906-08)
(Built 1911-33)

Since its inception the London County Council had occupied the old offices of the Metropolitan Board of Works in Spring Gardens, just off Trafalgar Square, neighbouring Scott's prestigious practice. There had been various abortive attempts to move out to new premises, the most recent being the proposal in 1900 that a new County Hall be built on the segment designed as part of the Strand/Holborn scheme. It was a pressing problem, the various London County Council departments were scattered across London and were fast increasing in size. While some moved in 1913, others were to wait until 1922 before leaving their crowded premises. It was the progressive faction within the London County Council who introduced the measure to buy a site along the

riverside at the south end of Westminster Bridge; a move bitterly opposed by the 'moderates' who were worried about the waste of ratepayers money.

In April 1905, the London County Council agreed to purchase the site. Norman Shaw and Beresford Pite testified before a Lord's Committee on the necessity for swift acquisition, and in the summer of 1906 preparations were made for a grand open competition. Shaw was invited by the London County Council architect W.E.Riley, to assist in the setting out of regulations. These were to be two stages, with an initial open competition, from which ten to fifteen designs would go from preliminaries to compete with eight selected architects. Contrary to Shaw's hopes of including younger competitors, the London County Council invited John Belcher, William Flockhart, Henry T.Hare, T.G.Jackson, E.Lutyens, E.W.Mountford, Charles Nicholson and his future partner Henry Corlette, as well as Ernest George.⁶²

In a building the size of County Hall, which it was hoped would symbolize the authority with which the London County Council had recently been invested, matters of style, planning and economy were of significance. While George was once again commended for his undoubted artistic ability, it was felt that his design could not 'lay claim to having attained to a successful conception of the importance or character of the problem in question'.⁶³ (Pls 435 & 436) Like several others especially among the nominated architects, he was accused of sending 'a plan of that type which suggests the provision in the specification of signposts to direct a stranger to its various parts. On the other hand', it was argued, 'the elevations, if unduly domestic, or hotel-like are powerfully massed, while the central portion of the river frontage strikes a higher note, and is as beautiful a piece of architectural composition as anything on view'.⁶⁴

The site was formed by the diverging lines of the riverbank and Belvedere Road, these George adopted for two long facades, keeping each, however, symmetrical and normal to the line of the frontage. The river elevation showed a lofty central section, raised above the wings, and flanked at each angle by an impressive tower, with an open cupola and angle turrets. The style, a loose classical, with echoes of his domestic work. There was a strong rusticated storey above which, between the towers, an order ran through three storeys. The wings were simple, broken halfway by a segmental fronton on coupled columns. One of the weaknesses of the facade was the fact that the ends looked unfinished

and indecisive, indicative of George's lack of confidence in handling the English Renaissance style. The main entrance, on the Belvedere Road side, was placed in a large recessed bay - this was common to many designs and a little shortsighted, since the majority of members came from the other side of the river. The plan^(Pl.437) revealed an entrance vestibule, leading to a spacious staircase and a long and tolerably wide reception hall, parallel to Belvedere Road. The adjustment of angles on the fronts was cleverly resolved - the semicircular end of the Council Room, with its axis at right angles to the river front, backing onto the oblique line of the reception hall. The division lobbies, deemed 'square and perhaps a little too small',⁶⁵ gave exit onto cross-corridors on each side of the Council room block, the corridors having slight bends in the middles to render them square to both fronts; and on the lower side they lead, rather conveniently to a large smoking room on one side, and a library on the other. The Members' dining room, however, was inconveniently placed two floors below, although it had its own access stairs. The Builder commented,

'On the principal floor, the arrangements in connection with the Council Department are very good. There are intermediate business entrances, one on each side of the centre, in both the long fronts. The engineers' drawing offices are on the east front, the architects' on the west which is not so good an aspect. The Building Act offices are conveniently situated close to one of the entrances from the embankment. Taken as a whole this is a very well worked out plan, the lines of communication are simple and direct and all the corridors have direct light from open areas the whole way along'. 66

The competition was won by a young outsider, Ralph Knott, a pupil of Webb. His design, combining a little English Baroque with French detailing, showed a well judged simplicity, worthy of Vanbrugh. Halsey Ricardo wrote in The Architectural Review,

'Mr Knott's scheme - the best of them all - is a good beginning - a good first preliminary sketch... But the majority of the competitors seem to have been so obstructed by the raging vortices of the conditions... that there is no example of a fine inspiration'. 67

Indeed many of the entries⁶⁸ lacked power and individuality, partly perhaps, because of the ubiquitous adoption of English Renaissance. In November 1908, when President of the RIBA, George passed judgement on the style:

'Well, after all the experiments we have been through in styles of various periods, whether the motif were Gothic, Francois - Premier or Dutch, we seem now, at least in our

street architecture, to be approaching a common language in a version of English Renaissance; a style that is not rigid in its laws, and which adapts itself to varying requirements and uses. At the same time individuality is somewhat lost, and the architect's handwriting cannot always be identified. In the competition drawings for the County Hall, lately seen together, it was curious to note how little one author was distinguishable from another, with any certainty; the compositions were good or bad on very similar lines...The possibility of all working again in a universal style has often been discussed; I do not think it will ever be attained, nor do I feel sure that it would be again... In earlier days, while tradition lasted, it was natural for all to work in one manner. There are now too many forms in our vocabulary to be set aside by a process of selection'. 69

Nevertheless, a fear of forfeiting individuality, perhaps accounts both for George's uneasiness in handling the style, and his rather domestic interpretation of the classical idiom in his three unsuccessful competition entries. This was to be his last. With characteristic generosity he applauded both the opportunity and the winner.

'The formation of County Councils and of Municipal Corporations has given an impetus to the building of Town-Halls, and some of these are amongst the most successful and characteristic of our modern buildings.

I hope I am rightly informed in saying that the design by Mr Knott, the fortunate competitor for the County Hall, has been revised⁷⁰ and is practically approved by the Council, with every chance of being carried out. We congratulate Mr Knott heartily: he is to be one of our great architects, for opportunities make men. One is pained to think of the good men and true artists who have started with the qualifications for fine work but on whom Fortune has never turned her face'.71

Golders Green Crematorium and West Columbarium(1901-02); East Columbarium (1910-11); Cloister (1912-16); Ernest George Columbarium (1926-28) by Alfred B. Yeates

The practice of cremation has a long history stretching back to the Book of Genesis, when Abraham is ordered by God, to prepare the funeral pyre for the sacrifice of his son Isaac. Other examples are instanced throughout the Old and New Testaments, and by the time of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, cremation had been generally adopted as a method of disposing of the dead. With the advent and spread of Christianity, however, and its concomitant belief in the resurrection of the dead, cremation fell into disfavour and by the fifth century the practice had been almost completely abandoned.

Indeed the history of cremation was to be the history of a struggle against conservatism, custom and prejudice; a struggle to reform the burial system and restore cremation to its former legal and popular usage.

The first re-emergence of interest came in the seventeenth century, 'Hydr otaphia: Urn Burial', an essay written in 1658 by Sir Thomas Browne, a physician from Norwich, was followed by the first advocacy of cremation as an alternative to burial in Philosophical Discourses of the Virtuosi of France in 1664. Numerous other discussions on the question took place during the next two centuries, but the most forceful revival really occurred in 1869, when the subject was presented to the Medical International Congress of Florence by Professors Coletti and Castiglione. 'in the name of public health and civilization'.⁷² 1872, saw more papers advocating cremation, the most important being that of Dr Polli, as it contained results of the first experimental researches. The following year Professor Gorini of Lodi and Professor Brunetti of Padua also published reports of practical work they had conducted. A model of Professor Brunetti's cremating apparatus, together with the resulting ashes, was exhibited at the Vienna Exposition in 1873, and attracted great attention, including that of Sir Henry Thompson Bart. FRCS, Surgeon to Queen Victoria. He returned home to become the first and chief promoter of cremation in England, and was instrumental in George's involvement in the design of Golders Green Crematorium - only the sixth to be built. In his paper The Treatment of the Body after Death, 1874, Thompson gave as a main reason for his support of cremation,

'it was becoming a necessary sanitary precaution against the propagation of disease among a population daily growing larger in relation to the area it occupied'.⁷³

The Medical Inspector of Burials for England and Wales, Mr Holland, replied arguing that the innovation was not a necessity and this elicited a forceful paper from Thompson which provoked a lively discussion and intense controversy in the Press.

Encouraged by the reception of his articles,⁷⁴ Thompson called a meeting of like-minded friends at his house, 35 Wimpole Street on 13 January 1874, when a declaration was drawn up rejecting burial and advocating cremation and signed by those present. The signatories are of interest, representing as they do the realms of art, science, literature and medicine: Revd H.R. Hawes, Shirley Brooks, Frederick Lehmann,

Charles Lord, Ernest Hart, R.C. Lehmann, John Everett Millais, John Tenniel, Anthony Trollope, T. Spencer Wells, A. Strahan, Mrs Rosemary Crawshay ⁷⁵, and Revd C. Voysey the controversial father of C. F. A. Voysey.

The Cremation Society of England was formally constituted on 29 April 1874 ⁷⁶,

'organised expressly for the purpose of obtaining and disseminating information on the subject, and for adopting the best method of performing the process, as soon as this could be determined, provided that the act was not contrary to Law.' ⁷⁷

With confirmation of legality, a large sum of money was subscribed in order to erect a proposed building, and a piece of ground was offered to the Society in the Great Northern Cemetery of London. The building would have been erected immediately had not the Bishop of Rochester, (within whose jurisdiction the cemetery lay) prohibited the establishment of a crematorium on consecrated land. The Council then sought an independent site, and an acre of freehold land adjoining the cemetery at Woking was bought from the London Necropolis Company. It was both secluded and readily accessible, as a train service suitable for the conveyance of the dead already ran between London and Woking.

Professor Gorini of Lodi, Italy, was invited to supervise the erection of his apparatus, ⁷⁸ assisted by William Eassie, the Cremation Society's Honorary Secretary. A horse was cremated on 17 March 1879.

Strong antipathy to the crematorium was voiced by a deputation to the Home Secretary, Sir Richard Cross, which, combined with the latter's fear that cremation might be used to prevent the detection of death following violence or poison, resulted in a refusal to allow the continuance of the practice until Parliament itself had authorized it, either by a general, or special, Act. Under the threat of legal or parliamentary proceedings, the Cremation Society abandoned further experiments and contented itself, from March 1879, in spreading information and trying to enlighten the public.

The period of quiescence ended in 1882, with a request to the Council of the Cremation Society from Captain Hanham of Blandford, Dorset, to cremate two members of his family who had left expressed instructions. The Home Secretary repeated his objections and Hanham resorted to erecting a private crematorium on his estate, where he

cremated his wife and his mother.⁷⁹ Although these events excited much comment in the press, the Home Office took no action, and it was not until the eccentric eighty-three year old Dr William Price, claiming to be a Druid High Priest, went for trial at Cardiff Assizes for having cremated the body of his five month old son, christened Jesus Christ, that a breakthrough was made. Justice Stephen delivered his all-important pronouncement in February 1884, that cremation was legal, providing no nuisance to others was caused in the process. Fortified by the Cardiff judgement, the Council of the Cremation Society declared itself absolved from its promise to the Home Secretary and issued a circular informing the public it was now prepared to proceed with the cremation of anyone so requesting it - Woking Crematorium was opened. The Society realised, however, that it was imperative at this stage not to give cause for any criticism, and consequently three conditions had to be strictly observed before a body would be accepted for cremation at Woking. As an appendix to his book Modern Cremation,⁸⁰ Sir Henry Thompson published the text of the forms which the Society required to be completed for each cremation, designed to prevent the destruction of a body which might have met death illegally.⁸¹ Despite these precautions, the Council for the Cremation Society fully appreciated the need for official regulation. On 30 April 1884, Dr Cameron (later Sir Charles Cameron), member for Glasgow, introduced a Bill in the House of Commons, 'to provide for the regulation of cremation and other means of disposal of the dead'.⁸² Meanwhile on 25 March 1885, the first official cremation took place, at Woking,^L of a Mrs Pickersgill, a well known figure in literary and scientific circles.⁸³ In 1888 the Council issued a special appeal to the public for funds to carry out plans to provide a chapel, waiting rooms, and other amenities at Woking Crematorium. The subscription list was headed by the Dukes of Bedford and Westminster, but the appeal raised only £1,500. The 9th Duke of Bedford stepped in, and through his munificence the buildings were completed, and further ground adjacent, purchased. The buildings were in English thirteenth century Gothic, opened January 1891, and were in the hands of trustees, In 1892, one hundred and four cremations took place. The movement was successfully launched, and endorsed by interest elsewhere in the country. In 1891, the Scottish Burial Reform and Cremation Society had been founded in Glasgow. At first concentrating on papers to societies and other such propaganda, it established the first Scottish Crematorium in 1895.

The first English provincial crematorium was in Manchester (1892), built by a group of public spirited citizens who formed a Society, followed by Liverpool (1896). In 1901 the Darlington Cremation Society⁸⁴ built in the grounds of the Cemetery; but the most significant provincial development was the opening, in 1901, of the first municipal crematorium at Hull.⁸⁵

Two outstanding events, however, were to make 1902 a milestone in cremation history. Firstly, the Act of Parliament, 'For the Regulation of burning of human remains and to enable burial authorities to establish crematoria'.⁸⁶ Secondly, the opening, in November, by Sir Henry Thompson, then President of the Cremation Society of England, of Golders Green Crematorium designed by Ernest George and Yeates. The Council of the Cremation Society, having sought unsuccessfully for many years to find a site on the north side of London, had at last succeeded in August 1900, in obtaining a site adjacent to Hampstead Heath. About twelve acres, the land was freehold, at Hendon, Middlesex, and was bought for £6,000 from Charles Digby Harrod. £4,000 was borrowed from Co. Bankers Smith, Paynes, Smith; and the Council of the Society assisted the formation of a company by taking 2,000 ordinary shares of £1. In October 1900, at the instigation of the Council of the Cremation Society, the London Cremation Company Limited was formed,⁸⁷ with the object of establishing a crematorium on the new found site. Martin Ridley-Smith was elected Chairman of the Company, and John Castleman Swinburne-Hanham⁸⁸ Managing Director, William Robinson being another director. Sir Henry Thompson was elected a director in November. At the first meeting a prospectus inviting subscribers to the ordinary capital was considered. In December, 1900 notice was given to the tenants of the Company land to quit before 25 December and vacant possession was sought. On 4 December William Robinson proposed a motion, seconded by Sir Henry Thompson and passed unanimously, that Ernest George,

'be instructed to furnish the company with sketch
'designs' for the buildings required to carry out the
objects of the Company's incorporation'.⁸⁹

Interestingly, C.F.A.Voysey 'was discussed in this connection before the foregoing resolution was arrived at,⁹⁰ Presumably in deference to his father having been a founder member of the Society, William Robinson, a gardening friend of Harold Peto,⁹¹ had been an active campaigner

for cremation, and was the author of Cremation. Urn Burial or, The Cemeteries of the Future. At the end of December 1900 George was given a copy of a memorandum on the Company's requirements, and his instructions. Swinburne-Hanham, Robinson, and George had met on site and discussed the proposals, and George had been taken to see Woking Crematorium. As early as 7 January 1901, George submitted plans and drawings for the Crematorium and Buildings, which,

'were discussed and considered at considerable length - Mr George was asked to submit further plans and drawings, revised so as to embody the results of that day's discussion, for further consideration'. 92

The revised drawings were presented by George on 21 January, together with approximate estimates for the cost of erecting the buildings,

'viz for the campanile, Chapel and Crematorium £6,500; for the cloisters £1,000; and for the Superintendent's house £1,400'. 93

Criticism was chiefly directed to the top of the campanile, and its architectural detail, the height of the cloisters and the Superintendent's house. Ridley-Smith being indisposed, Robinson had chaired the meeting and it was agreed that consideration of the drawings be further adjourned to enable the Chairman to see them. On 23 January 1901, Swinburne-Hanham chaired a statutory shareholders meeting, divulging that the

'Directors had instructed Mr Ernest George, the well-known architect to prepare sketches for the intended buildings', and that the Board was 'busy considering them. He felt sure that Mr George would command the confidence of the public'. 94

Further appeals for capital would have to be made, but he thought that people would see that the Company's preference dividend would be well secured and subscribe for these shares.

'He heard talk of the competition, but he did not fear it. What the company contemplated was very different from building a crematorium in the corner of an already filled cemetery'. 95

The position and nature of the Company's land was described to the shareholders, who were further reminded that the Cremation Society had paid the expenses of forming and registering the Company, and further were giving office accommodation free of charge.

On 4 June, George was put in communication with Messrs Henry Simon of Manchester, the preferred furnace manufacturer, on the understanding that these negotiations were, 'at the moment preliminary'.⁹⁶ Alfred Yeates attended a meeting on 7 August 1901,⁹⁷ called to discuss the possibility of proceeding with the proposed buildings. He submitted approximate estimates,

Chapel and Crematorium	£6,000 (costs of shafts and flues included)
Two furnaces	£1,200
Cloister (say 50')	500
Boundary wall	350
One cottage	850
	<hr/>
	£8,900

George was instructed to continue preparing working drawings for the proposed buildings, and when complete, to obtain estimates for putting in the foundations. The contract with Messrs James Smith and Sons, of Norwood, was signed on 6 September, for laying foundations, 'in the space of 10 weeks',⁹⁸ for the sum of £1,335. Work began on 13 September.

The Managing Director had subsequently visited the site and seen the excavations. George was instructed to obtain tenders for the superstructure as soon as the drawings were sufficiently advanced. In November £250 was allocated,

'to be spent under the general direction of Mr Robinson for planting and fencing the property of the Company, he having kindly undertaken to superintend the work'.⁹⁹

George and Yeates exhibited their drawings and plan at the Royal Academy in 1901. The function made very specific and unprecedented demands, after all there were only six precursors, none of which had distinguished itself. They either remained utilitarian, or lamely echoed traditional ecclesiastic Gothic as a means of reassurance. While reassurance was important, so was grandeur and dignity. The Company, encouraged by the growing acceptance of the Society, were intent upon the proclamation of official and public approval. Mindful of the threat of competition, but also of continued opposition to the Society, a confident note had to be struck. Visitors would wish to take leave of their loved ones in appropriate surroundings, and the architectural style was of crucial importance in creating the ambience. It was a

delicate balance. While committed supporters of cremation looked for a dignified but glorious departure, sceptics might look for reassurance.

In their designs, George and Yeates departed radically from the picturesque, eschewed the Gothic of Woking, and instead, sensitively adopted a version of the Northern Italian, Lombard-Romanesque style. This had the required note of dignity, sobriety and restraint, allowing the architects to substitute a bold manipulation of masses and more abstract elements of relative scale, for familiar picturesque conceits. The design, being simple in treatment, depending on its grouping breadth and proportion rather than ornament, ^(Pl.438) was perfectly judged. Above all, the style was new in this context; it retained ecclesiastical overtones, but was different from the Gothic which was still enormously popular. Sceptics, opposed to cremation, would instinctively have taken offence had a style traditionally associated with orthodoxy been used. George's ^(Pl.439) choice of style was an excellent one.

The plan showed the entrance forecourt, with chapel to the left, approached by a porte-cochère with the Superintendent's buildings opposite. On the furthest side, a door led into a long, round arched cloister, intended to connect the buildings. Also connected to the cloister, by a portico, was a small octagonal-domed building, not identified on the plan, but in fact the Columbarium, designed to house urns containing ashes, the first of its kind in England. ^(Pl.440)

The crematorium had four furnaces, the flues rising within the tower. The clever provision of a small upper furnace in the tower, contrived to consume smoke and gas, ensured that no smoke could be seen rising from the tower. Externally, above the furnaces, the tower stopped short with a cornice and a flat roof, and acted as a campanile to the chapel. The bells were hung, to be clearly visible in the opening. Internally the chapel was panelled to a given height, with brick walls above and an open-timber roof.

The interior of the Columbarium resembled an Italian brick baptistry. The centre was open to full height and the four storeys and galleries were approached from turret stairs. The Italianate feel was enhanced by the bold simplicity of the brick walls and round-arched windows and other openings with their mouldings of tiles or smaller bricks. There had been criticism of George's initial treatment of the height of the buildings. His final solution introduced plain, low-pitched roofs, with half round tiles, which helped to disguise the height.

In November 1901, Messrs Henry Smith Ltd, wrote to the Board of Directors,

'calling attention to the fact that the proposed suppression of the antechamber reduced the capacity for dealing with bodies by one coffin'. 100

The Managing Director reported that,

'he gathered from Mr George that to provide an antechamber would sacrifice the appearance of the catafalque and aperture communicating with the furnace room and that insomuch as he saw little practical advantage in having an antechamber, had instructed Mr George to suppress it'. 101

On 28 November 1901, the question of tenders for the superstructure arose. George and Yeates reported that the lowest was from Messrs J. Smith & Sons, the contractors for the foundations, who, for £8,125. undertook to complete the work in nine months. After discussion, in which George revealed that their tender included a marble floor, oak panelling in the chapel, a bell, loading up apparatus by Messrs Grundy, and two houses, but did not include any portion of the cloister, entrance gates, making up approach or furnaces - the decision was adjourned, but the tender was finally accepted on 5 December 1901. It was decided that the opening of the Crematorium in 1902, would be announced. George and Yeates undertook to deviate from their drawings, in their dealings with the contractors, without the consent of the Directors.

In January 1902, George and Yeates met Messrs Swintons; Thompson was present, and it was resolved that,

'in order to provide for the adoption hereafter of mechanical means for carrying the coffin to the proposed rear furnaces one pier of the tower be corbelled, and the east wall of the furnace room set back as proposed by the engineers'. 102

In May 1902, George

'submitted a sketch and plans of a columbarium approximately estimated to cost £1,500, exclusive of interior fittings which were approved and Mr George instructed to proceed with the erection of the building on a site to be selected'. 103

The 1901 Royal Academy Drawing had clearly been a preferred and proposed arrangement, since the cloister appears not to have been built at this juncture, since on 11 August 1902 it was resolved that, the back forecourt

wall continue to act as a Columbarium. The Crematorium was officially opened on 22 November 1902 by Henry Thompson, and the Directors Report of that year reflected on

'The style and appearance of the buildings which bear throughout the mark of the excellent taste and experience of the architect Mr Ernest George'. 104

On 12 December 1902 a design was approved for

'a covering for the iron catafalque table and doors with bronze and fitting bronze legs to the former at an estimate of £95...' 105

the details to be determined by the Managing Director in consultation with George and Yeates. Darcy Braddell later recalled,

'when the Crematorium at Golders Green was being designed, the question of a suitable inscription over the catafalque table was discussed: the rather obvious MORS JANUA VITAE was decided on. This, however, did not meet with the approval of the drawing office, so that a beautifully lettered 'Passengers are particularly requested to examine their change as mistakes cannot afterwards be rectified', appeared on the drawing. But alas, it had to be taken in to E.G. that he might show it to Sir Henry Thompson, who may be considered to be the Father of Cremation in this country and who had been instrumental in commissioning George to design the building'. 106 (P1,441)

Work continued after the official opening - although a design for a portion of the proposed cloister, estimated to cost £1,911.9s.0d. was postponed once again. In November 1903 it was reported that water was seeping into the basement of the Columbarium, but estimates were postponed until the District Councils plans to drain the district were made public.¹⁰⁷ In December 1903, George and Yeates presented a sketch of proposed accommodation for undertakers,¹⁰⁸ it was resolved that they be asked to consider a flat roofed, fireproofed building. In 1904 they designed a proposed coach house.

On 18 April 1904, Sir Henry Thompson died and was cremated at Golders Green and a memorial in statuary marble was later erected in the chapel of the Crematorium. His brother, Sir Herbert Thompson took over as Hon. Treasurer of the Society.

Ernest George was further approached in March 1910 to

'consider the design for a new Columbarium in relationship to the present group of buildings and future extensions, care being taken to avoid drawbacks in present building viz. darkness and water in basement especially'. 109

The new Columbarium was to be erected 'at the extreme Eastern end of the existing buildings and on a rather larger scale than the present one' 110. The staircase outside the square tower gave access to five separate chambers, and a stone arcading formed the balconies from which the niches for urns were approached. The floors were of concrete with marble paving. In the lowest floor there were separate chambers, or vaults, with bronze doors. Messrs Thomas Lawrence and Sons, of Bracknell, supplied the bricks, and Messrs Stuart's Granolithic Company the granolithic steps. (Pl.442)

In December 1910, George's 'Plan A' was accepted, the architects were instructed to prepare detailed drawings and invite tenders, 'the shell of the building and the niches to be separately tendered for'. 111 On 2 March 1911, tenders were received 112, the lowest, from Dove Brothers Limited, at £2,775 taking five months to complete, was accepted, In order to avoid problems encountered in the West Columbarium, the new site was to be drained into the existing sump, close by. In May 1911, a design for a gateway to connect the new Columbarium with the present buildings at a cost of £111.2s.4d was approved, but postponed. The lower windows of both the old and new Columbarium were to be fixed, 'as a protection against theft or damage'. 113 On 19 and 26 May George and Yeates wrote to the Directors,

'stating that the estimate of the niches fixed complete to be £877.6s.3d subject to a saving of £15.0s.0d if sherraged iron tiles were used instead of copper and suggesting a yellow shade for the niches on the top floor'. 114

The tender was accepted and

'the red yellow eggs. submitted and the green specimen of terrazzo already at Golders Green to be accepted. The disposition of the same throughout the building to be left to the architects'. 115

The arrangements of niches was by Mr Noble, the Secretary, who arranged the office floors, and Ernest George, who organised the principal floor. The East Columbarium was opened in 1912 and cost £6,465.1s.6d.

A meeting with George, Yeates and the Managing Director, was held to discuss the material for closing the gateway niches - asked for Hopton Wood stone.

The decision to build the cloister, connecting the columbaria on the garden front and providing wall space for tablets and memorials, originally mooted when the chapel and other buildings were designed in 1901, was finally honoured in December 1912. In May 1913, George and Yeates resubmitted their plans, as requested, estimating the cost to be £300. (Pl.443)

Questions as to the form and construction of the roof, and whether the cloister should be open or closed, were considered; the decision was for an open cloister, with a timber ceiling. A model of two bays was to be set up on the proposed site for the further consideration of the Board. In July 1913, George reported

'that his firm has that morning opened the tenders for the building of the cloister... and putting in the new windows in the Chapel and think the tender of Messrs Dove Bros. Ltd. to build the cloister with a chestnut roof and a design in stone paving, for £2,175 and to put in the new south windows to the chapel for £175, subject to an allowance of £40, if the design should be omitted in the paving, and of £141 if the roof is deal instead of chestnut'. 116

While George recommended Dove Brothers be accepted, to include chestnut for the roof - the question of a design in the paving was left until the Board could see an example. The cloisters opened in 1916.

It would seem that George continued as consultant architect for the Company - all matters of design appear to have been referred to him for comment. In 1909 Robert Crawshay¹¹⁷ proposed a memorial to his mother, and disapproved of the alternative position suggested by George and Yeates; the memorial was eventually placed as originally proposed, underneath the contemplated cloister. In 1910, a Mr Armstrong produced plans and drawings for a proposed crematorium on the Company's land, to be erected for the Duke of Bedford, were considered and referred to George. In 1912 a memorial which involved the placing of a wooden kneeling desk before the front row of chairs on either side of the chapel, requested by a Mr Hennessy for his wife, was agreed, subject to the design being by Ernest George and 'the work being carried out to his satisfaction'.¹¹⁸ In 1914 George was invited to meet Lutyens to discuss the memorial to R.H.Philipson, 'with the object of inducing him (Lutyens) to modify certain points in his design'.¹¹⁹

In 1916, George was asked by William Robinson to design a tablet in the cloister, 'to mark the date of the planting of the trees in the garden'.¹²⁰

After his death, in December 1922, George was himself cremated at Golders Green, as was his sister Mary Elizabeth,¹²¹ and his son-in-law, Charles Henry Robinson D.D.¹²²

The Ernest George Columbarium, considered by many to be the most impressive building of this character was completed in 1928, to the design, appropriately, of Alfred B. Yeates, at a cost of £7,625.18s.6d.

Southwark Bridge, London (1908-21)

The new Southwark Bridge was opened by King George V on 6 June 1921, the year before George's retirement from practice. Built to replace Rennie's original of 1814-19, the engineers were Messrs Mott, Hayward and Anderson, and the architectural treatment was the work of George. The opening occasioned an article on London Bridges in The Architectural Review, which forms an apposite introduction to George's involvement in the chequered history of the rebuilding. Perhaps in character with the recent admiration of French taste, a comparison between the bridges of London and Paris was invoked.

'A sweeping glance reveals in a flash their superiority (those of Paris) in numbers as well as individual merit. Twenty-nine bridges span the Seine; joining the banks of the Thames in London there are but a bare half dozen that properly come into the reckoning. As a matter of fact, St Paul's Bridge, if and when it materialises, will make but the sixth of the undistinguished series of truly metropolitan public bridges. Even if we were, somewhat recklessly, to count in those minor and generally insignificant bridges - Lambeth, Vauxhall, Chelsea, Battersea, Putney - our grand (or grandiose) total would fall short by half the table of the bridges of Paris'.¹²³

This was ruling out what the commentator described as 'our railway monstrosities'.¹²⁴

Swift claims, however, were made for the newly opened Southwark Bridge, which together with London Bridge, it was felt, ought to be exempted from such condemnation. London Bridge, after all, had in its favour, the affection of every Londoner, and could be deemed to epitomise London, although perhaps less effectively than St Paul's. Since

'Neither by size nor by its situation can Southwark Bridge hope to compete with its nearest neighbour (London Bridge) for the affection of the Londoner. It must depend entirely on its beauty for the attraction of its admirers'. 125

The Architectural Review, while commending the 'certain degree of charm which cannot be decried even by the most callously critical', recognised that this was never going to earn it the passionate worship paid to Waterloo Bridge. Although unable to compete historically with either London or Waterloo Bridges, Southwark Bridge, argued the Architectural Review, was nevertheless,

'unquestionably finer than the other bridges in respect that it has infinitely more architecture than they'. 126

The article concluded,

'Pont Alexandre III is always held to be the most exemplary instance of the collaboration of architect, engineer and sculptor. Southwark Bridge will not supersede it in that proud pre-eminence. Nevertheless it is pleasant to be able to congratulate very sincerely the architect (Sir Ernest George RA) and the engineers (Messrs Mott, Hay, and Anderson) in their having united to produce what is undisputedly the second finest bridge in London'. 127

The 'individual character' deemed by the commentator, to be the bridge's 'priceless endowment',¹²⁸ and wholly attributable to George's contribution, presents a certain irony, since the history of the proceedings surrounding the rebuilding of the bridge reveal George's association with the project to have been protracted (1912-21), and unsatisfactory. Indeed an examination of the events leading to the final design expose, what would seem to have been, an unfortunate and retrogressive desire on the part of the promoters to separate architectural and engineering considerations. The success of the final solution can be said to rest largely with George, who in practice, refused to allow such a potentially disastrous divorcing of elements. Nevertheless, the wrangles over money and procedure, which bedevilled the project from the outset, and which were still active in 1921, do serve to underline the great gulf between circumstances surrounding the design and erection of bridges in London and Paris. A comparison, drawn somewhat unfairly by the Architectural Review, since the encouragement of great developments in civil engineering fostered by the highly centralised government of France, under the ancient regime, had no parallel in England. The history of Southwark Bridge shows the French mastery of accurate

surveying, careful accounting, and most crucially the competent assembling and organising of personnel created by such a regime, to have been sadly lacking and probably impossible to achieve, in the political and architectural arena of the period in England.

As early as 1899, suggestions had been put forward by the Court of Common Council for the Improvement of Rennie's Southwark Bridge. Built originally in 1814-19¹²⁹, by the Southwark Bridge Company, it was bought in 1868 by the Bridge House Estate (City of London Corporation), who had hitherto rented it. Dissatisfaction with the original bridge centred largely around two issues; firstly the steepness of the gradients, particularly on the city approach, where it was as abrupt as 1 in 18, and secondly, the hindrance that it caused to navigation owing to its having three spans instead of the five of most other London Bridges. Cannon Street Railway bridge, less than 150 yards down the river from Southwark Bridge had five spans and to pass both bridges in safety craft had to follow a tortuous course and run the risk of fouling the piers of the bridges. This was a vindication of the considerable opposition surrounding the Act of Parliament for the construction of the original bridge by the Corporation of London and the Conservators of the river, which had centred on the potential obstruction to navigation. Rennie, as engineer-in-chief had partly overcome these objections by producing a design aesthetically comparable to those of Waterloo and London Bridges. Realising that this was the narrowest part of the river between Blackfriars and Old London Bridge, Rennie was quick to adopt large arches. Stone construction was out of the question, except for the abutments and startings, and so the theory of arched voussoir design was carried out in cast iron. Generally regarded as unsurpassed as an example of the use of cast iron in bridge building, this material harmonised with architectural treatment of the pylons. ¹³⁰ However, nothing very definite appears to have been attempted by way of dignifying the approaches, which, with the exception of a respectable range of houses on the south-eastern side, were left to grow of themselves. By 1899, improvement was felt imperative.

At a meeting of the Grand Committee of the Bridge House Estate, on 17 February 1902, it was decided to form a special sub-committee, under the Chairmanship of Arthur Holt Barber. They met on 11 March 1902 to consider reports dealing with the issue of effectively improving the bridge and its approaches. ¹³¹ It was decided that a Surveyor should

report on the estimated cost of a new bridge,

'somewhat after the style of Blackfriars Bridge, with the cost of constructing a viaduct from Cannon Street to the new Bridge and one or more spur streets from Upper Thames Street or Queen Victoria Street'. 132

the latter it was hoped, would relieve congestion which resulted from poor approaches, and alleviate the problem of gradient. It was not until February 1903¹³³ that improvement was resolved 'forthwith'. Plan A was to be adopted, which involved reconstructing the Bridge and thereby lowering the crown of the roadway between 7' or 8', and raising the level of Thames Street, at the intersection with Queens Street, to a height not exceeding 3', the whole at an estimated cost of £35,000'.¹³⁴ Returns of vehicular traffic were to be taken for one week, on London, Southwark, Blackfriars and Tower Bridges. In October 1903, an order of the Court of Common Council was read, that the designs for the New Southwark Bridge, 'be put out to competition, with instructions that the Designs be as ornamental as possible'.¹³⁵ E.W.Crutwell was informed, in December 1903,¹³⁶ that he was to be retained as engineer for the reconstruction, and that it was proposed that 'ornamental designs from well known Architects',¹³⁷ would be invited, and that

'the author of the accepted design would be associated with him and further that his personal services were preferred to and not those of his firm'. 138

Crutwell 'acquiesced'.¹³⁹ It was further resolved in December that the President of the RIBA be asked, 'to nominate a certain number of Architects to send in designs',¹⁴⁰ and suggest the number and the premiums to be offered. Aston Webb, then PRIBA was further asked to act as assessor for a fee of 200gns. Webb attended a special Southwark Bridge Committee meeting, on 8 December, accepted the invitations, and suggested that six architects be invited to participate, and that the fee to unsuccessful competitors be 100 gns.¹⁴¹ Further, that the designs should be submitted by the end of April 1904. At the same meeting the Southwark Bridge Bill draft was submitted.

On 14 March 1904, petitions against the Bill were considered, and estimates produced. The total was £318,000 with £10,000 set aside for 'Architectural Embellishment'. The Bill was put before the House of Commons Committee, between 15 and 17 March, - the Select Committee¹⁴² recommended that no further steps in connection with the present Bill be

taken. The reasons for rejection were germane to the formulation of the later Bill. The report of the Court of Common Council was read on 24 March 1904 to the Grand Council, stating that, a satisfactory settlement had been arrived at with the Thames Conservatory Board and other River interests, and that provision had been made for foot passengers during the progress of the works. However, there was opposition from the owners, lessees and occupiers of premises at the northern end of the Bridge, to the proposed alteration of the level of Upper Thames Street, and the ways in which the gradients of the various streets and lanes would be affected. This resulted in the Select Committee of the House of Commons concluding,

'As far as relates to the changes which would result from the raising of Upper Thames Street, they do not consider the Promoters to have proved their case',¹⁴³

but pointing out that

'the elimination of this most important feature of the scheme approved by the Court, leaves Queen Street with its heavy gradient of 1 in 29 and destroys the value of the scheme as a whole; and recommending that for this reason it is inexpedient to proceed further with the present Bill.'¹⁴⁴

On 18 April 1904, the Grand Council endorsed that the Southwark Bridge Bill be abandoned, and letters of thanks to the 'Thames Conservatory Board et al',¹⁴⁵ be sent. The whole matter was resuscitated, in January 1908, and in March it was recommended to the Grand Committee of the Bridge House Estate, that they seek authority from the Court of Common Council to 'engage expert advice'.¹⁴⁶ In April Sir Benjamin Baker was asked what fee he would require for a report on the Reference from the Court of Common Council, including the question of Approaches, and a rough estimate of the cost. Baker was a member of the pressure group, The Architectural Vigilance Society, a short lived body, 'formed for the purpose of promoting and assisting in the architectural improvement of London, by advice and suggestion'.¹⁴⁷ Other members included H.H.Statham, Editor of The Builder, Lord Windsor, Sir Edward Poynter, W.B.Richmond, Brock, Frampton, Aston Webb, Belcher, Carøe, Beresford Pite, H.T.Hare and M.H.Spielmann. The decision to invite Baker to participate in the Southwark Bridge project was perhaps an effort to court favour. At the same meeting in April 'a design by Mr Thomas E.Collcutt for a suggested Bridge over the Thames was inspected'.¹⁴⁸ In June 1907 Baker accepted,

at a fee of 250 gns to cover professional services, and announced that Basil Mott would act with him in the matter. Baker, however, died that month, and Mott was asked to draw up a report on similar lines asked of the late Benjamin Baker. By September 1907 Mott was cautioned by the Chairman of the Special Sub-Committee about cost; a Surveyor was to be appointed at a fee of no more than 200 gns - Mr Alexander Rose Stenning. Further developments between November 1907 and March 1908, included correspondence from Southwark Borough Council and the Borough of Lambeth, raising the issue of accommodation for trains. A meeting with a deputation from the London County Council Highways Committee was organised to discuss plans A and B, but nothing was resolved. On 15 June 1908 a letter from the RIBA was received, asking

'that the proposals of the Committee with reference to the proposed reconstruction of Southwark Bridge may be laid before them for consideration'.¹⁴⁹

The RIBA's anxiety might well have been prompted by their having been denied interference with the designs for Vauxhall Bridge in 1902, in which they had sought involvement.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore in 1908, Professor Beresford Pite had addressed the RIBA in 'The Architecture of the Bridges of London', exhorting

'It is to be hoped that London is not to lose all the quite aesthetically satisfactory bridge designs in our generation, but the necessary and now settled rebuilding of Southwark Bridge may involve us in a serious artistic loss which we shall be unable to replace'.¹⁵¹

It was resolved, however, that,

'the matter is not sufficiently advanced at present, but that if proceeded with, the letter of the RIBA will again be considered'.¹⁵²

It was not until April 1909 that Mott and Stenning submitted 'three plans and estimates for a suggested reconstruction' and estimates regarding the acquisition of property. Two plans, A and B, were to be considered seriously, the width between the parapets to be 80' instead of 65', subject to a satisfactory arrangement being made for the accommodation and running of trains across the bridge, A plan was authorised but later rescinded. Mott was instructed to bring a report

and a scheme improving the gradients, with an estimate. In September 1909 another anxious letter from the RIBA was read, but consultation was again adjourned. In November 1909, approval was sought for (a) Construction of a new Bridge as shown on Plan D3, estimated cost £1,646,983 and (b) the reconstruction of Southwark Bridge to the width of Queen Street Place, as shown on Plan M94, at an estimated cost of £261,000. The committee was authorized to obtain any necessary professional assistance, and to confer with the London County Council and any other interested authorities, 'it being understood that the alterations to Southwark Bridge will be proceeded with as soon as Parliamentary Powers are obtained'.¹⁵³

Mott and Stenning were appointed Engineer and Surveyor respectively.¹⁵⁴ The matter was adjourned until October 1911 when the Corporation of London (Bridges) Act was read and it was resolved that the alteration of Southwark Bridge be proceeded with at once. An agreement with the London County Council was drafted.¹⁵⁵ In December 1911, Mott promised that the drawings would be 'submitted to the Committee before being lithographed, and that the contract would be let out early next year'.¹⁵⁶

It was not until January 1912 that the advice of an architect was mooted, doubtless on the advice of the RIBA. It was resolved by the Special Sub-Committee that,

'before the reconstruction of Southwark Bridge is carried out, architectural advice be taken before the design and elevation of the Bridge is approved, and that it be left to the Chairman and Mr Mott to consult an architect'.¹⁵⁷

No clear indication is given in the minutes of the Committee as to why George was approached, but recently Knighted and a Past President of the RIBA, he must have been considered sufficiently distinguished. In April 1912, the Chairman, J.W.Domoney

'reported that he had had an interview with Sir Ernest George on the subject of the architectural treatment of the new Southwark Bridge and of his acting with the Engineer Mr Mott in the matter, when Sir Ernest George had expressed his readiness to act in the capacity desired by the Committee'.¹⁵⁸

It would seem, therefore, that once approached, George nominated his own services. There is evidence, however, that bridge design was a matter of some interest and concern to George. In his address to the opening meeting of the RIBA in November 1909, George had voiced his opinions on the subject,

'Between the City and Southwark is to be a new 'St Paul's Bridge'. This is a matter of vital interest, and we trust that with collective wisdom and good judgment we may have a fine architectural feature, with well-studied approaches. Is there any reason why a Thames Bridge built now should have less dignity and propriety than London Bridge and Waterloo Bridge? Is there not a shoddy and commercial appearance about most of the later attempts to span the river - a lack of monumental fitness? The bridges of a great city are the features that most impress the mind and remain on the memory.' 159

In May, Mott reported on George's suggestions, stating

'that a possible delay to the completion of the plans might arise in connection therewith; and suggested that the architectural features should not form part of the plans at present, but that a provisional amount be inserted in the contract for Architectural decoration'. 160

This was agreed, but in May 1912, Mott submitted a wooden model of the proposed centre arch, and George offered 'drawings showing his proposed method of architectural treatment'. 161 It was resolved

'unanimously, that the designs and drawings as submitted by Sir Ernest George, subject to any modifications which it may be found desirable to make: to the engineer (Mr Mott) approving from an engineering point of view; and to the design for the balustrading being submitted and approved'. 162

Mott was satisfied with the architectural treatment. In June 1912, George wrote to Sir James Bell regarding his fee, a source of wrangle until 1921.

'I have carefully considered what would be a fair charge for the work that I have pleasure to be doing in conjunction with Mr Mott.

Your architect is responsible for giving design and architectural style to the Bridge, with drawings and details (upon which I am now occupied) not only of the masonry, mouldings and carving, but of the balustrades, lamps and all features of interest.

I am aware there are foundations and other portions of the structure with which I am not personally concerned. I consider that with this somewhat exceptional division of Professional work the Architect's fee should not be less than a commission of one and a quarter per cent, upon the whole expenditure, which I understand is about £260,000.

I trust this will seem to your Committee in all respects reasonable'. 163

The Bridge House Estate Committee was clearly unhappy with this proposal. Mott and the Chairman were despatched to discuss the matter with George, and on 17 June 1912, the Grand Committee

'Resolved that the consideration of the proceedings as far as they relate to Sir Ernest George and his proposed connection with the reconstruction of Southwark Bridge be adjourned', 164

appearing to be unmoved by any dichotomy between architecture and engineering. The contract drawings were submitted on 17 June 1912, examined and recommended for approval on 8 July. The Comptroller and Engineer were to proceed with preparation of specification and contract, with the Town Clerk if necessary,

'That no reference to the Architect do appear in any part of the contract'. 165

It was also noted that George had originally asked for '1¼% of the whole expenditure,' but agreed in his interview to accept a fee of £2,500.

'Mr Mott stated he understood Sir Ernest George had since expressed his readiness to accept a fee of £2,000. George, however, was further pressured; it was Resolved, that it be left to the Chairman and Mr Mott to again see Sir Ernest George and negotiate with a view to the payment of a fee of 1,000 gns for his services'. 166

At this juncture, the Grand Committee appear to have appointed William Emerson, since 'his proposals with respect to the architectural treatment of the proposed New Bridge' ¹⁶⁷ were accepted on 27 June, in a letter from the Town Clerk. In July, Emerson wrote requesting clarification of his position. He was passed over.

Clearly George had placed himself out of favour with his letter asking for 1¼%. However, on 31 July, he is reported to have 'agreed to undertake the same at a fee of £1,000'. ¹⁶⁸ The arrangement was approved. On 14 November 1912 George wrote to Domoney,

'Mr Mott has just been in and has gone carefully through my detail drawings for the architectural treatment of the Bridge. He expressed himself pleased with same and he thought with me it would be well if your sub-committee should have the opportunity of seeing the scheme as worked out.

If you think this would be well, would you very kindly make an appointment for me to show the drawings when your committee are meeting'. ¹⁶⁹

George and Mott attended on 12 March 1913, when it was resolved that the Grand Committee be recommended to approve George's framed coloured drawings, and also his design for the proposed balustrade,

'but that this approval shall not be taken to include an acceptance of the details nor the settlement of the materials to be used in construction. That the design of the proposed abutments be approved'. 170

George suggested

'the consideration of approaching Mr Pomeroy on the subject of statuary for the shore ends of the Bridge and was informed that this Committee are unable to agree the consideration of statuary and that the subject must be adjourned'. 171

F.W.Pomeroy had collaborated with Gilbert Seale on the interiors of the Central Criminal Courts, Old Bailey (1900-C6), by Edward Mountford.

On 17 March, the Town Clerk was instructed to write to George saying

'that any facilities granted to the Press for reproducing the accepted design should not be confined to any one newspaper but that a general notification should be simultaneously given to the Press, including the Technical Press, that permission will be afforded for illustrating the design'. 172

On 8 October 1913, George requested payment on account of his advisory fee, adding.

'As I shall be glad to help in the final arrangement of sculpture etc. I would suggest that 200 guineas out of the thousand might be retained for a while, for my desire is to remain your advising Architect'. 173

He was paid only £500 in November and requested the balance in July 1916.¹⁷⁴ The special sub Committee reported,

'Mr Mott was heard, and stated that he was not in a position to say when the architectural features would be finished but that he had sufficient working drawings to complete the work'. 175

George was paid another £250¹⁷⁶ but on 1 April 1921, he wrote to the Chairman,

'I think I proposed 1½% as the Architects charges. I was told that a commission was not contemplated, but a fee for giving drawings and advice. For this I agreed to the proposed fee of £1000 which was unusually small for the amount of work entailed.

Owing to the War the work has been much increased and from time to time we have been called in to consider models etc. It is nine years since the arrangement was made. The fee has been paid in instalments and £250 is due, the present taxation has entirely altered the value of the fee. Considering these conditions I would ask to receive a settlement of £500, I am sure your Committee will see the fairness of special consideration.

I retired a year ago, but my partner Mr Alfred Yeates

who is carrying on my practice, has been in consultation with Mr Mott'. 177

The request was rejected and George appealed.

'I suggest that my reasonable proposal for an increase be agreed to. Called in as I was in Consultation on this important matter I presumed that, as usual, the fee would be paid when my scheme and drawings were approved in 1913'. 178

But the special conditions were not recognised and in October 1921 George wrote with courtesy and resignation,

'Pray let it be so but I must ask now for the discharge of the long outstanding debt of £250 the balance of the said fees'. 179

Payment was presumably finally settled before George's death in December 1922.

Work had started on 4 November 1913, when the Bridge was closed to pedestrian traffic and temporary footbridges were erected. The new structure was to be comparatively simple, with five arches replacing Rennie's three. The city approach was reduced to 1 in 32.7, the Southwark approach to 1 in 46 and the maximum gradient of the bridge itself to 1 in 45.24. These alterations necessarily lowered the level of the roadway, and although the shallower arch allowed by the steel construction was more convenient and had aesthetic credit, the head above Trinity high water level was reduced from 28'9" to 26'; the new clearance however, was quite adequate and equal to that given on other river bridges.

Although the levels of the approaches were to be improved, since no additional width had been secured to the road at either end, the iron arches were designed to spring from the existing abutments, the extra width to the bridge was to be gained by cantilever construction outside the girders. The decking was carried on built-up cross-girders resting on the spandrels, which were themselves cross connected by horizontal and diagonal bracing. Joists were fixed between the cross girders, and the open spaces filled in with half inch buckled plates. The depressions of the buckled plates were filled in with asphalt, and above this the wood paving with concrete foundation was laid. The outer half of the width of the side pavements was carried on built-up brackets riveted to the two outer main ribs on each side.

George's call for 'dignity and propriety'¹⁸⁰ in bridge building can be considered in the light of his own design. His watercolour drawing of Southwark Bridge was shown at the Royal Academy in 1913,^(Pl. 444) and illustrated one of the intermediate granite masonry piers, which were carried up with pierced lunette and segmental cappings. Each massively rusticated pier with decorative cartouches within, had a recessed seat or shelter, on the footpath, for the use of passers by and sightseers. The whole was somewhat unexceptional in interpretation of the Baroque. Of particular interest, however, was George's respectful reference, in the pierced lunette and segmental cappings, to similar motifs from the west towers of St Paul's Cathedral, the latter clearly visible from the bridge. The small shell motif might have been a symbolic reference to pilgrimage routes, perhaps thought appropriate since the bridge was so close to both St Paul's and Southwark Cathedrals.

The piers facing the approaches on the Middlesex and Surrey sides of the river, were to be constructed of granite,¹⁸¹ with heraldic sculpture, George felt that sculpture

'has made the greatest advance in our time, and we have sculptors who are not limited to the production of statues, but who adapt their work to architecture with a reserve and a knowledge of the wants of a building'.¹⁸²

However, the modest sculptural embellishment planned for the bridge was interrupted. Yeates wrote to Sir James Bell on 21 December 1921,

'When your committee honoured us by accepting our design for the architectural treatment of Southwark Bridge, the sculptural terminals, four in all, at the approaches (being a Griffin or Lion with shields bearing the City Arms) were an important part of the composition.

These were carefully considered by the Sculptor F.W.Pomeroy R.A. who made sketch models for them in plaster and provided the following estimates,

Each group in granite	£1000	each
" " " Portland Stone	700	"
" " cast in bronze	800	"

These prices given in 1915 would unfortunately be insufficient at the present time. With the war and stoppage of the works nothing more was done in this matter but we trust that now your Committee may give us instructions for the completion of these leading features of the approved design'.¹⁸³

With seemingly customary disregard for George and Yeates's requests, the letter was read and referred to the Special Sub-committee on

15 December - the work was not proceeded with - to the lasting detriment of the bridge design. The Architectural Review were clearly mindful of the absence of executed sculpture, in their somewhat reserved praise

'Now, the consideration arises that where the earlier bridges of London suffer rather excruciatingly is in the mean bareness of their approaches, their cold disdain of the aid of the sculptor who can give them decoration and dignity. Sir Ernest George R.A. has seen to it that Southwark Bridge shall not altogether deserve to come into this dismal category'. 184

The Office

It is from the recollections of former pupils and assistants that the clearest insights into office life and practice emerge, since no documentation appears to have survived from Maddox Street, where Alfred Yeates continued to practise after George's retirement in 1920. Yeates was still producing designs in the late 1920s¹, before himself retiring to Seaford in Sussex, where he died in 1944.

E. Guy Dawber (1861-1938), who had entered the office of George and Peto, as an assistant, in 1882, wrote in his obituary to George in 1922,

'He may justly be said to have, more than any other architect, formed a school of his own, for the many who worked under him, none was educated at any architectural school, and all passed through the ordinary office routine'.²

Since there was no formal method of training available for architects in the 1870s and 1880s, the educational debates being things of the future, aspiring young men would become articled to an architect, to whom a handsome fee would be paid for the privilege of a seat in his office. Pupils would be bound for a fixed period of three years. By the turn of the century classes were available at the RA School and there were evening classes at the AA. in Marlborough Street and at the Regent Street Polytechnic, but the work was examination orientated. It was therefore to an office that aspirants looked for a day-to-day education in architectural practice.

Reputation was therefore of paramount importance. During the 1880s George and Peto was one of the leading offices, as successful as their contemporaries R. Norman Shaw (1831-1912), J. D. Sedding (1838-91), Sir Arthur W. Blomfield (1829-99), Thomas Colcutt (1840-1924), J. J. Burnet (1857-1938) and Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905). Aston Webb (1849-1930) was yet to build up his immensely influential practice. Dawber remembered George's office with great affection,

'When I first came into his office, just forty years ago, he was perhaps one of the busiest architects in England, large country houses and other buildings filling his office with work'.³

Some twenty years later, the office was still prominent. Darcy Braddell (1884-1970), who claimed to be George's last pupil, and who gives the fullest accounts of office life and practice,⁴ commented that, in 1902, many aspirants were attracted to Maddox Street.

'Ernest George's office was one among a few that was much sought after, and a man thought himself very lucky to be employed in it; they came from all over the kingdom, notably a number of hardworking and usually very 'raw' Scotsmen, not with the idea of earning money so much, but rather to continue their education and improve their knowledge. They received what would now be considered microscopically small salaries, but they did not mind that, for, apart from the range and quality of the work they saw, there were the men they met, from whom much could be learned. The better the office, the better the men to be found in it'. 5

It would appear that there were, on average, six articled pupils, one or two paid assistants, the manager and various Clerks of Works in the office. Fees for articled pupils were high. Darcy Braddell recalled that at his interview the cost was mentioned,

'a sum which was nearly half as much again as the fees of the most expensive school of architecture we now have in the kingdom'. 6

However, as will be seen, George's pupils and assistants were largely drawn from prosperous middle or upper class families; interestingly, several were Cambridge graduates.

The number of paid assistants varied at any given time. The firm advertised for temporary assistants to cover staff holidays, ⁷ and for additional staff during busy periods and at times when very large, specific commissions were undertaken. Martin Shaw Briggs (1882-1977), who was engaged as a junior assistant at Maddox Street in 1904 recalled being paid,

'the princely sum of 35s a week, although I had just passed the RIBA Final. However, the work was interesting and it came as a shock when the manager Gould, informed me that some terrific commission for a titled client had fallen through, so that Carey ⁸ and I, who had been hired for the occasion, were to be sacked only two or three months after we had arrived'. 9

Temporary assistants, would have been in plentiful supply, Briggs recalled,

'Among architects and solicitors it was customary to obtain a few years 'London experience' after qualifying and before returning to the North to practise'. 10

George was extraordinarily proud of the long list of 'able men' ¹¹ who had passed through his office. After his election to the Royal

Academy in 1917, more than sixty of his old pupils and assistants entertained him to dinner and presented him with a congratulatory address, inscribed with their names.

George and Vaughan had started practice in a third floor office in Cannon Street, near to George's father's City offices. When in May 1869, they succeeded to the business of Frederick Hering, they moved into his offices at 11 Argyll Street, just off Oxford Street, and parallel with Regent Street, in an area particularly favoured by architects (see Chapter 1). Argyll Street itself held particular interest being, as George pointed out, the street which 'Norman Shaw had already made classic ground'.¹² The years between 1869 and 1883, on the first floor at 11 Argyll Street witnessed considerable activity, and increased success.

Sometime between 3 November 1883 and 7 January 1884¹³, George and Peto moved to 18 Maddox Street, to offices on the first floor. Accommodation consisted of a manager's room, a waiting room, two private rooms, one each for George and Peto, and a drawing room for the draughtsmen.¹⁴ Darcy Braddell recalled, the front door, 'operated by a wire from the floor above to save the necessity of an office boy running up and down the staircase every time the doorbell was rung' lead into

'a gloomy narrow hall facing a steep staircase... Arrived at the top of the staircase, however, a welcome change of atmosphere awaited me, for here I found myself standing on an unexpectedly wide landing, the walls of which were covered with many beautiful, gold-framed drawings, some executed in watercolour, others in brown ink and wash. All were, of course, of architectural subjects, but country and town houses, both on an immense scale, predominated'.¹⁵

The cultivation of ambience was a feature common to Nesfield and Shaw's offices in Argyll Street in the 1860s. Nesfield's room was described as,

'a studio, a treasure-house of exotic oddments, furniture of all types. Japanese prints, and drawings by artist friends',

while

'Shaw's room was less flamboyant, but contained whatever he could afford to collect and display'.¹⁶

George's room was medium sized, its walls panelled in oak, in a Dutch style, with two mullioned and transomed windows, with a little judiciously placed Flemish and German stained glass which

'let brightly coloured patches of light on to the highly polished bare oak boarding of the floor'. 17

On either side of the windows, which had no curtains, hung oak shutters decorated with elaborate hinges and spring centres of early Flemish design. Against the wall stood one or two cabinets of the same period. The fireplace was open, designed for burning wood and was formed with a surround of lightly carved stone. Above it hung a sombre oil painting of a view of the Italian Campagna. A few 'superb'¹⁸ examples of Italian faience dishes and jars apparently added warmth and colour to the surroundings. Down the length of the room, in the centre, was a drawing board. A commentator from The Builders' Journal remarked,

'Great baskets of sweet-smelling logs appear in the rooms in Maddox Street, and the curling white smoke from the hearth lazily floats away into the unknown, as you saturate yourself more thoroughly with the works of Ernest George which appear on the walls of the dimly lighted rooms'. 19

In 1886, as part of his series, 'Rambling Sketches' in The British Architect, entitled, 'In an Architect's Office', T.Raffles Davison recorded,

'In their rooms in Maddox Street, Messrs Ernest George and Peto have very happily illustrated their architectural practice by various fittings and fixtures which have completely transformed a very ordinary set of London offices. Besides new fireplaces and lead-light glazing, wood panelling and good wall coverings, there is a great additional charm of fine old furniture. The old Italian table, the leather covered chair, the fine old ivory handled knife, the eighteenth century fire shovel, the blue and white inkpot, and the bronze frog, are only a few items from many which are interesting and valuable'.²⁰
(Pls 445 & 446)

What kind of education and training could the owners of the 'numberless initials'²¹ incised and filled in with red sealing wax in the desks in the drawing office at Maddox Street have hoped to receive?

It is important first^{to} establish George's own methods of working and the structure of the office, in order to appreciate the kind of experience which pupils and assistants would have gained. Throughout his career, George worked with a partner. In 1895 The Builders' Journal reported,

'Mr George had expressed his views more than once, in favour of a system which is derided by many of those artistic fanatics who cannot see an inch in front of their eyebrows. Those who know Ernest George well, know that the frictions of architectural practice would soon wear away the polish of his art, and that is why he so strongly believes in the advantages of partnership, when wisely entered into with a man, whose treatment and up-bringing makes him competent to deal with the petty worries and complications which arise in actual work'.²²

All three partnerships followed a similar pattern. George undertook responsibility for all the designing while his partners dealt with the other aspects of professional life, which were necessary for a successful practice. George argued,

'I have always felt that the complete architect is seldom at the same time the best business man, with qualifications for determining estimates, supervising works and materials, and meeting the many legal and other problems and difficulties that arise in building operations. In matters of judgement, companionship is very helpful, and in a busy life partnership serves to secure certain times of leisure and recreation'.²³

Vaughan's role was described as being

'chiefly engaged in the superintendence and active duties of his profession, to which part he assiduously devoted himself'.²⁴

He was magnanimous in his anxiety

'that nothing should be attributed to him that emanated from his partner, who undertook the more artistic branch of the profession'.²⁵

In assessing George's partnership with Harold Peto, The Builder's Journal argued,

'There is no less assertive practitioner than Ernest George, and in his partner he found the antithesis to himself, although Mr Peto is a man of extreme artistic culture and taste'.²⁶

Alfred Yeates, they described as, 'a gentleman of much business and commercial acumen'.²⁷ On receiving the Royal Gold Medal from the RIBA in 1896, George himself remarked,

'I am elected on the ground of my 'executed works', and this gives me the opportunity to acknowledge the

share that others have had in my works, also the pleasure and help I have found in my partnerships. My good friend, Alfred Yeates, has been my companion for the last three years; and for fifteen years prior to that time Harold Peto was my very able colleague. He was not a draughtsman, but he had all the feeling of an artist, and to his originality of thought, soundness of judgment, and refinement of taste, he added also a capacity for the conduct of affairs that cannot be divorced from the practice of our craft, with its many sides. I feel that I have had a 'good time' and have been allowed to work quietly, sheltered from many of the worries that disturb single-handed men'. 28

It was undoubtedly in the light of the experience of these three successful partnerships that George counselled students of the RIBA,

'In some cases combination meets the many requirements of the architect, who must play the part of artist and man of business. If any two of you, quite sure of one another, agrees thus to divide the work, it may be for your mutual happiness. The work will be done with fewer disturbing interruptions, and you will have companionship to lighten the worries that must arrive from time to time'. 29

This calculated division of responsibility was shrewd and successful and can be seen reflected in the day to day running of the office. In 1892, just before Peto's retirement, Stanley Davenport Adshead (1868-1946), joined the office for two months as a temporary assistant. He recalled,

'Peto was rarely seen, but it was understood that he spent most of his time with clients. Ernest George did all the designing and the dozen or more draughtsmen simply traced and fitted together his designs under personal supervision. . . he seemed to turn out the designs, which were as good as working drawings, in a continuous stream. I remember on one occasion he made all the working drawings for a model village in about half a day; a church, school, pub, blacksmith's shop and no end of cottages, which flowed out of his office into the draughtsmen's office in a continuous stream, to be traced and duplicated in parts, by the improvers and assistants'. 30

George was generous in his acknowledgement of the efforts of those in his office,

'With those of us who enjoy doing our work, not employing 'ghosts' we make plans, elevations, and details and draw our full-size mouldings. - probably doing everything that we think interesting. Yet for the efficient

working of the whole scheme, how much depends on those who in the 'draughtsman's office', carefully elaborate the plans of footings, plans of roofs, the direction of flues, the exact spacing of stairs, and innumerable details (many of them not interesting,) but on which the comfort of the house so largely depends! ' 31

Darcy Braddell recalled that in 1902, the business manager was a man named Gould, who

'kept accounts, interviewed travellers (always by appointment), wrote specifications, dealt with quantity surveyors, sanitary and heating engineers, kept the drawing office 'gingered up' for the prompt production of drawings, and was the lord and master over two office boys. He worked in a room to himself which opened immediately off the drawing-office and to which he never denied access to any of us at any time. He was a dear little man, devoted to Ernest George, in whose service he had been ever since he was grown up, I believe. He never tired of telling me stories of bygone days in the 'eighties and 'nineties when Peto was there and the firm were building half South Kensington. In physical appearance he was slightly rotund, and had a remarkably egg-shaped head, one end of which was beginning to go bald and the other covered with a brown sailor-like beard such as King George V wore'. 32

The Head Draughtsman in 1902 was Ernest Major, described by Braddell as,

'the kindest and most good-natured of men, never tiring of helping me when I was in difficulties with a drawing or of answering the many thoughtless questions which I was in the constant habit of asking him...' 33

Physically he was,

'a thick-set, powerfully built man in his middle thirties, with blue eyes, thick golden hair - which was so wavy it looked as if it had been crimped with curling tongs every morning - and an immense golden moustache which curled up at the ends on either side of a strong chin with a deep cleft in the centre of it. He looked as I imagine a Danish pirate might look were he to put on modern clothes - neither did these looks belie his ancestry, for he was, in fact, almost certainly directly descended from one of the marauding Danes that settled in the Fen country of Lincolnshire, whence he came'. 34

Major was apparently a 'very fine clean draughtsman, with a sound knowledge of the methods of construction used in those days'.³⁵ He was a painter-etcher and had frequently exhibited work at Burlington House. Although an accomplished water-colourist Major was eclipsed in this field, in Braddell's view by George.

High standards and attention to detail were of the utmost importance at Maddox Street. Braddell recalled,

'During the time I had spent there every letter was written by hand - copies of which were taken by a hand press. All ink used in the drawing office was produced by the laborious but extremely effective process of grinding a stick of Chinese ink round and round in a small pool of water; all drawing-paper was invariably stained on a board before being used; contract drawings were made on Whatman, inked in and coloured; no traveller dared to show his face without a written appointment to be allowed to do so; and, lastly, and almost unbelievably, there was no telephone'. 36

It must be added, however, that Romaine-Walker also had no telephone, and as late as the 1920s Drysdale had no typewriter.

Somewhat naturally, attention tended to centre around George's skill as a draughtsman, etcher and watercolourist and there is no doubt that his own personal style of perspective drawing was very influential among his pupils, and made his work very popular generally. Dawber wrote, in 1922,

'Beyond everything else, Ernest George was an artist with perhaps more of a bias towards the picturesque in architecture than the monumental, but as a draughtsman and water-colour painter he was absolutely unrivalled... To be with him, as I have, and to watch him put on paper with marvellous precision and rapidity a difficult and complicated subject, always selecting and grouping his sketch with intuitive knowledge of what was right, was a helpful, if depressing experience.

Many of his water-colour drawings will rank with those of our greatest architectural artists. His work was so free, so delicate, and yet forcible. His drawings show a delightful freedom and yet absolute accuracy of perspective, a power of selection and composition which always appeals. His countless sketch books, filled with notes and sketches, measurements and details were really amazing, and oftentimes, I and others in his office, used, in his absence to look at them with wonder and delight'. 37

Without doubt, the drawings that flowed from George's pen, unlike the rather stilted perspectives rules in black pen from Shaw's office, had an accomplished fluidity. Executed in soft sepia wash technique, they were immensely popular and influential. Often criticised by cynics as presenting persuasive picturesque ideals which could not be matched in execution, the soft style was undisputedly

well-suited to conveying natural textures, such as tile brick and oak. It is interesting, however, to compare these with the office working drawings which were in pen; new and rather hard in effect, these came closer to the buildings as executed. This raises the important issue of the role of the perspective. As George himself argued, carefully elaborated 'plans of footings, plans of roofs . . . and innumerable details (many of them not interesting), but on which the comfort of the house so largely depends!',³⁸ were essential to convey, often in the form of diagrams, the precise information to a builder, or to any other interested person. The perspective, however, did not play such a precise role in the difficult process of turning a design into a building. Gavin Stamp argues,

'Rather it belongs to the provinces of both architecture and art; it is an artist's impression and the success of a perspective depends upon artistic imagination and skill - it is not mathematically precise'.³⁹

The perspective, however, as George was quick to appreciate, was an invaluable bridge between architect and client, providing as it did, the representation of a design in three dimensions, firmly standing in situ. It was also a persuasive advertisement when exhibited at the RA or published in the architectural press. Furthermore, by the 1880s technical advances ensured that both pen and tone drawings lost none of their evocative and stylistic qualities in reproduction.⁴⁰ In their book on Architectural Drawing, Perspective and Rendering (1931), Farey and Edwards argued,

'If a client or building owner is going to spend a lot of money upon a house or other structure . . . they may legitimately demand to have a more realistic representation of the buildings to be erected than can be supplied by the type of drawing which suffices for architect and contractor. Thus the perspective view which an architect shows his client must be realistic, it must give a true representation of the building, for in so far as it fails to do this it is definitely misleading. And if the failure is deliberate, the perspective sketch may even be described as fraudulent'.⁴¹

As Goodhart-Rendel once put it,

'Having unrivalled powers of truth-telling it can also magnificently lie. It is the honest architect's most candid and inconvenient friend; it is the dishonest architect's most artful and convenient confederate'.⁴²

There was, of course, always the danger of technical facility being confused with a concern solely for the pictorial, thus, by implication, denying on the part of the architect any interest in, or command of construction and practical matters. At worst,^a drawing could be considered as a means in itself. But no-one was more aware of this than George himself. Addressing students at the RIBA, George, while acknowledging the art of drawing to be of primary importance, since 'it is the language in which your ideas must be told . . . best learnt by the study of the figure from life or from the cast', nevertheless cautioned,

'drawing has generally received its full meed of attention and the greater danger of regarding it as an end instead of a means. We have known such facility acquired that the hand has moved in advance of the mind - a fluency that speaks before thinking what is best to say. There is also drawing so pretty in its technique as to give fictitious attraction to a bad design'. 43

In drawing, George maintained,

'tricks are a hindrance to truthful expression,' 44

and students were therefore advised to adopt and cultivate an accurate, methodical, rather than 'sketchy' technique. As will be seen, pupils were encouraged to develop such a technique in the office. Notebooks, warned George, 'which we like to bring home full of pretty things', could hinder analysis and understanding.

'Notebooks are sometimes filled with interesting doorways or windows, without a record of their relation to one another or to the wall-spaces that give them value'. 45

Furthermore, he argued,

'In our search for the latter (pretty things) we may possibly miss what is noblest in architecture. The sublime is not readily transferred to the sketch-book; it is no use making picturesque jottings of the Parthenon or the Pantheon. Those who have great facility with the pencil find less effort in the use of the fingers than in the exercise of the mind'. 46

At worst, he argued, drawing as an exercise could become a substitute for 'contemplation and analytical thought',⁴⁷ which ought

to address the issues of whether buildings were determined by the necessities of construction or were evolved as part of a beautiful composition.

'Methods of study and modes of working and drawing',
argued George,

'are but great preliminary steps and stages, looking on our great Cathedrals and the noblest monuments of the past, we must remember how little they owe to draughtsmanship'. 48

The architectural perspective was, of course, a firmly established tradition in the nineteenth century.

'The purposes of these drawings were several. Sometimes they were prepared to indicate to a client the appearance of an architectural design; often they were made for exhibition at the Royal Academy. Ability at perspective drawing became valuable for the various architectural prizes for students: the Gold and Silver Medals of the Royal Academy Schools, the Tite Prize and the Soane Medallion at the RIBA, but, above all, perspectives were executed for architectural competitions'. 49

Many of George's pupils and assistants were winners of student architectural prizes, furthermore, many of them were to use the perspective, as did George, to attract clients. Although the attitude towards perspectives was gradually ^{to} harden, with regard to their value in competitions, ⁵⁰ they had virtually disappeared from this field by the 1920s, they continued to be prepared for exhibition and publication, and it was chiefly through these vehicles, that the influence of an architect's design was exercised. This was a lesson well learned by products of George's office.

It must be pointed out, however, that during the years of some of its finest expressions, the architectural perspective was criticised. ⁵¹ There had been a long-standing prejudice against, not only perspectives, but against stylistic architectural drawings generally. In 1906, T. Raffles Davison, an avowed defender of the value of the medium was forced to argue, that

'any attempt to belittle the art of drawing in its relation to architecture is so much to be deplored.

Drawing is not a mere luxury but the very language of art for the architect, and we shall do far greater harm by discouraging artistic drawing than by giving it free scope. You see out of the very excellence which has been attained in the art of drawing this evil has arisen; that its seductiveness has at last frightened all the tough old professors of architecture into a dread of losing their moral balance when they consider competition designs, and students have to be gravely warned lest in pursuing their art of drawing they will be losing their hold upon the art of building'. 52

The sheer consistency with which George produced perspectives indicated his endorsement of Raffles Davison's viewpoint. George nevertheless felt obliged to remind students that facility in drawing was only one of the many skills to be acquired by the architect.

Indeed the lessons George had to offer his pupils and assistants were to be learned by dint of hard work and a determined search for first hand experience, since he maintained, what students did earnestly for themselves was worth more than all their able professors could do for them. The rare insights into office practice suggest that George practised what he preached. A heavy emphasis was placed upon pupils finding out for themselves, Braddell recalled,

'On my first morning, I remember, a copy of a book of plates illustrating the orders was placed before me, a sheet of 'Whatman' given to me, and I was told to copy line for line a version of the Roman Doric Order. Nobody troubled to explain to me how it had evolved, or why a column has entasis, or what was the purpose of a module; this kind of information you were expected to find out for yourself, and as everybody roared with laughter at you if you did not know - and no healthy young man likes being laughed at - you soon made it your business to find out'. 53

Braddell was 'bitterly disappointed' at his first days drawing office experience, but gradually came to understand the relevance of the exercise,

'Thus it was that one learnt in those days. You were, so to speak, thrown in at the deep end; if you got to the other side you were probably going to be some good; if you did not, well, you just sank to the bottom and possibly drowned'. 54

George's Presidential Addresses to students of the RIBA in 1908 and 1909 give a valuable insight into his concerns which must have informed his attitudes towards pupils and assistants in the office.

In reminding students of the RIBA that, 'the arts of building and architecture cannot be separated', he argued that, ideally, an architect should be 'a good joiner, mason or worker in metal', but realistically cannot spare time, 'to grow efficient in the various crafts'.⁵⁵ Nevertheless maintaining,

'when drawing a moulding he (the architect) should have stone, oak, or plaster in his mind. He has so many good books of 'Examples' now that he is apt to become a paper architect, losing familiarity and touch with the realities of building'. 56

Since he considered a knowledge of construction to be 'the paramount essential in the Curriculum' (of the RIBA), he encouraged students to,

'Use every opportunity of visiting works in progress, builders' workshops and masons' yards; if also your hand can acquire some skill in any of the trades, it is all for your good. The limits of time and the shortness of life must be taken into account in making choice of subjects to be mastered'. 57

Likewise the value of first hand experience was underlined in the aesthetic development of the architect. Sketching and travelling, particularly abroad, since it offered 'a more complete break with the office', were recommended as the leisure pursuits making the most valuable contribution to professional training. Museum visits were also encouraged, with the caution that, while objects

'demonstrate the treatment and workmanship of the artist and craftsman, but much of their meaning is lost when these features are divorced from their natural surroundings. The student must look at things as a whole, noting the important element of scale; he must not be absorbed by details'. 58

The measuring and sketching of existing buildings, George felt to be an inescapable and invaluable activity, particularly in view of his scepticism of the value of photography to students, since,

'that which he (the student) attains without effort is hardly a possession; he had better worry himself for hours making an indifferent drawing than secure the best photographs or of book illustrations of his subject'. 59

This was doubtless a reference to the plethora of books which had recently flooded the architectural libraries, and articles in the

architectural journals, with examples

'admirably selected by men of judgement, especially setting forth the beautiful houses throughout our country'. 60

While these were to be valued, argued George, they were not to be misused as an excuse to shirk 'the prosaic work of measurement and personal study'. 61

In addressing the students of the RIBA, George was at pains to eschew the specific issues of style, arguing,

'it is a minor matter, for the artist's hand will be evident in the work whatever the treatments he affects or the vogue of his time, 62

and maintaining,

'that the qualities making for good or bad are, in all styles, - the same - viz; truth of construction, justness of proportion, breadth and simplicity, and above all simplicity. All the tawdry vulgarities that shock you are the violation of all that quality; efforts after the pretentious or pompous; the assumption of something that is not.' 63

The judicious application of ornament, he felt, was crucial to the achievement of such simplicity. He never advocated servile copyism, but instead argued for the retention of a reverence for, and thorough knowledge and understanding of Tradition, considering it to be the only valid basis for those striving for originality. He further recommended a prudent study of Nature, 'her laws, her methods and her marvellous arrangements of colour', being careful not to,

'transplant the actual forms of verdure, chiselling them in stone, or using the fronds of ferns for metal castings'. 64

Perhaps stemming from his belief that architecture is associated with every condition of man, and that it should find 'appropriate use either for the temple or the tavern', came George's concern for practical realities, which he instilled into those who passed through his office,

'A painter may desist from his work awaiting inspiration; the architect, when grounded for lack of matter, may turn from composition to the many practical details that his occupation demands. He must recognise that he is a man of business, with grave responsibilities to his clients; he must not pose as the brilliant genius, above mundane affairs. He must cultivate methodical habits and exactness'. 65

While it was important to seek the society of fellow artists, 'be they painters, sculptors or craftsmen,' George argued that students must spare time for the 'outer world', where they must not be 'unseen or unknown', since

'it is there you find the client who gives you the chance of beautifying the world ... it is no use being a good architect if you have not a client to bring the work. Cultivate tact in the treatment of the client when you get him; consider things from his point of view, his doubts and anxieties, financial and other when starting on an important building enterprise'. 66

George also set store by literary style, arguing letters should be 'terse and clear of verbiage';⁶⁷ and also by the art of public speaking, remarking, 'you should take the advice as sound from one who lacks it'.⁶⁸ A knowledge of foreign languages was also considered an asset. Above all, simplicity of life was encouraged,

'let your wants and encumbrances be few, that you may be free in the race... Comfort, cushioned ease, and expensive cigars are not a stimulus to the artist; discipline he needs, and the best form is self-discipline'. 69

It is interesting to note, in view of the backgrounds of many of his pupils, that George felt that inherited wealth bred indolence.

George's advice was both practical and realistic, much of it resulting from his own experience. His lessons were well learned by his pupils. The atmosphere at Maddox Street fostered none of the intensity of that of Shaw, which had produced the St George's Art Society, which, in 1884, became the Art Workers' Guild, which in turn founded the Architectural Illustration Society⁷⁰ and encouraged the new Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, covering craft activities. The short-lived Kenton and Company was founded in 1890, through the earnest endeavours of Shaw's pupils, Macartney, Lethaby and Reginald Blomfield. By 1892, it was clear that all these groups and individuals had helped in great part to shape the distinctive profile of the Arts and Crafts Movement, despite the often anomalous and apparently contradictory elements within the loose grouping of the Art Workers' Guild. Harold Peto had joined the Art Workers' Guild in 1888 and resigned in 1891, near the time of his retirement. George joined in 1889 and exhibited with the Architectural Illustration Society⁷¹ but resigned in 1901. He could not be considered a vociferous advocate

of specifically Arts and Crafts ideals (see Chapter 6). No such philosophies, of the kind nurtured in the Shaw office, were to emerge coherently from Maddox Street.

The strength of George's practice did not lie in the formation of progressive doctrine; but, then, even Shaw had questioned the validity of the Ruskinian design philosophy held by some of his pupils, when applied to intrinsically architectural problems. As Andrew Saint points out,

'The crafts method produced fine furniture and metal work, and embellished many good houses with original ornament. But it did not help the architect with little money, a limited brief, or a niggardly client. To have followed rigorously the prescriptions for this kind of artistic architecture would have meant reducing still more the small proportion of architect-designed buildings. The conditions of the Victorian city simply did not allow the procedures of building by leisurely day-work with which Lethaby and Prior so earnestly toyed'. 72

Although the products of the George office were taught to value high quality in materials and craftsmanship, such ideas were not presented as tenets of the Arts and Crafts philosophy. George, as has been shown, always drew attention to the practical and realistic matters which he felt should concern architects in equal measure. As a result, his pupils seemed better able to combine a high quality in design, with the day-to-day business of building and completing commissions. A further consideration of George's attitudes towards craft, and his relationship with craftsmen is therefore important in this context.

In his approach towards both interior and furniture design, just as he considered Tradition to be the basis for contemporary developments in architecture, 'so with the old stuffs, decoration and pictures', a respect for Tradition was thought important for interior design. His own interiors were invariably designed in an effort to create picturesque effects, to give the impression of a house lived in by many generations in which the charm of olden days was combined with modern conveniences. This, he believed could be achieved in terms of furniture and decor, either by using antiques, or by employing first class examples of contemporary craftsmanship. Dawber recalled,

'He was an enthusiastic connoisseur of old furniture, and always impressed upon clients the importance of

'keeping to some uniform scheme of furniture design to be in keeping with the architecture of the house with which it was to be associated'. 73

As has been shown, where appropriate, George designed furniture himself, much of it forming part of the integrated schemes and built in situ. Free standing, individual pieces were never direct copies, but rather slightly simplified versions of existing pieces of quality with which he was familiar. He always avoided the grandly ornate, drawing on sources ranging from the medieval period to the mid-eighteenth century. His designs witness not only his historical expertise, but also his concern for structural stability.

In calling for a considered relationship between architecture, painting and sculpture, he revealed a concern for contemporary craftsmen,

'...In our country the Painter is seldom allowed the chance... It may be that our people do not enjoy colour or feel the need for it, for I have generally found that the spaces one has reserved for decorative painting are allowed to go bare. The client does not want colour, or is afraid of it. He may be induced to give a thousand pounds for a fine tapestry for a staircase wall, and well it will look; but that is no encouragement for contemporary art'. 74.

The prevailing fashion for filling new houses with pseudo-antique furniture, 'often badly made and maltreated to give the appearance of age', was unfortunate in this respect,

'Whole streets in good quarters of the town are given up to the sale of objets, old, second-hand, or spurious antique, the public believing that such is the right thing to buy. The workshops of Nuremberg and Venice have a vast industry in producing "old" things to meet the demand, while our own craftsmen lack encouragement. While commenting thus, I confess to having spent my own pocket-money on various cabinets and other objects that I prize, and that I find good to live with. Such things should be in the hands of artists and should be preserved with reverence. My tirade is against the buying of them in ignorance, as a fashion that checks progress and development. As a critic says, 'the past will not supply enough fuel to keep up the fires of imagination'. 75

While George was clearly in favour of the growing interest in the

crafts, which he felt to be, 'quite a feature of our time', and while he found it interesting to 'find men with the higher education becoming workers in metal, gesso and designers of stuffs and various decorative material',⁷⁶ unlike some contemporaries, he was not totally committed to contemporary craftsmanship in principle. His concern was, above all, for quality of craftsmanship and informed unity. This is apparent in George's attitudes towards the craftsmen he employed and is particularly well illustrated in the valuable account provided by Braddell of George's working relationship with J. Starkie Gardner who executed a considerable amount of work for the practice. It also serves to further establish George's position vis à vis the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Gardner had been educated in Switzerland⁷⁷ and then at South Kensington before setting up business with an elder brother as ironworkers; his brother was to retire early. The executing, in 1868, of gates for the side entrance of the Victoria and Albert Museum, commissioned by Sir Philip Owen, marked the start of a long working relationship with the Museum. Gardner made reproductions of wrought iron objects in the collection, advised, lectured and wrote their handbooks on wrought ironwork. He also organised three exhibitions of 'antique objects in enamel, iron and silver', and wrote the catalogues for the Burlington Fine Arts Club. On the accession of Edward VII, Gardner was appointed metal worker to the King. He later executed the screen, with three magnificent pairs of gates, designed by G. Washington Browne, to commemorate Edward VII at Holyrood. A pioneer in the revival of artistic hammered ironwork, Gardner was employed by Scott, Street, Pearson, Waterhouse, Edis, Seddon, Sedding, Bentley, Rowand Anderson, Lutyens, Niven, Romaine-Walker, G.A. Crawley and Frank Verity as well as Ernest George and Harold Peto. His many commissions included work at Eaton Hall, Clumber, Alnwick, Arundel, Sion, Lampton, Gosforth, Hever, Knole, Penshurst, Australia House as well as the execution of designs by George Crawley for ships on the Canadian Pacific and other liners on the China routes.

Later partnered by his wife, Alys Bateman, he worked in wrought and cast iron, gold, silver, pewter, lead bronze and enamel. W. Bainbridge Reynolds, architect, designer and member of the Quatro Imperial Club⁷⁸ began his career with Gardner.

Braddell recalled,

'No account of life in Maddox-Street in those days could be complete without mention of Starkie Gardner. Here was an outstanding character if ever there was one. Very talented and of great learning and scholarship, he was about the most casual business man imaginable. But in spite of this last defect, he managed to keep for many years an immensely important clientele formed from the aristocracy of about half Europe, for whom he designed and made a variety of objects ranging from bronze doors to silver candlesticks. He was frequently employed by Ernest George to carry out the elaborate series of locks, hinges, hasps, fire-dogs, sconces and such-like with which his work abounded in great profusion.

These things were all expected, and nobody dreamed of objecting to the vast sums that must have been allocated in the bills of quantities under the heading 'ironmonger'. Carving too, in all materials, was in equal profusion, and only the very best of craftsmen were ever employed. George designed all his own ornament, not in the rough, but to full size with sections showing precisely the planes to be given to each object. These full sizes were then handed over in his room to the particular craftsman chosen to execute them, who then took them away, and George never looked at what he had designed again until it was completed. It is an astonishing tribute to his personality that, with the designer so apparently divorced from the craftsman, all his work should have been so competent and so easily discernible from that of those who were his imitators'. 79

Such practice would have been anathema to the doctrinaire members of the Art Workers' Guild, and yet both George and Gardner were members. Their working relationship was based on a remarkable degree of mutual respect.

Apparently Gardner never answered letters, Braddell recalled being sent down to his works,

'to try and find out why no replies had been received from him in answer to letters, about a month old, concerning some silver sconces he was supposed to have finished and delivered. While I was awaiting for him to appear, my glance chanced to alight on his wastepaper basket, which I saw to my astonishment was full of unopened letters. When Starkie came in and heard what I had come about, he said, 'Perhaps we shall find Mr George's letters here!', and started to pull out the contents of the wastepaper basket, remarking as he did so, 'I answer the top six every day and others when they work their way up'. Those were nice leisurely days, and I cannot help feeling that if fine craftsmanship is wanted it must go hand-in-hand with a certain amount of leisure and much forbearance on the part of the patron'. 80

Many clients of course, in those days, conducted their everyday lives in great style. Braddell remembers the Duchess of Portland visiting Maddox Street. A claret-coloured landau, drawn by a superb pair of bays dashed up to the front door,

'An enormous coachman in a light cloth-coloured caped overcoat was on the box, a large footman beside him, each wearing top hats with cockades. Meantime a 'tiger' similarly attired but with top boots, had leapt off his perch at the back of the equipage and in a flash opened the door (the panel of which carried a full coat-of-arms) to let a woman of singular beauty, wearing an immense picture hat, step out. I stood aside to let her pass. Thus did one of the grandes dames of the day make an afternoon visit to her architect's office'. 81

In the early years of the century there was no surtax and income tax had just been put up to 1s. to pay for the South African War. The aristocracy were therefore very rich - the legislation, largely designed to deprive them of their riches was still a few years away. Braddell remarked,

'It is of interest to note here that during my three *years*' apprenticeship (from 1902 to 1905) the office was engaged in four separate jobs, 82 each commissioned by a private individual for his own habitation and each costing more than a hundred thousand pounds'. 83

As previously stated, many of George's pupils came from prosperous middle, or upper class backgrounds, clearly drawn by George's reputation. In some cases they came by personal recommendation. There is no surviving documentation to suggest how pupils were selected or what criteria were employed. It cannot be disputed, however, that George succeeded with his pupils; he was greatly respected and admired and all accounts speak of him with great affection.

Herbert Read was the first well known pupil, engaged in 1879, three years after George and Peto formed their partnership. The years between 1869 and 1883, on the first floor at 11 Argyll Street, witnessed considerable activity and increased success. Read's pupillage came at a time when a steady flow of commissions had begun, many through Peto's connections (see Chapter 2). Work in 1879 included houses in Pinner, Guildford, and Kintail in Scotland, but 1880 was to mark an explosion of work, not least of which was the development of Harrington Gardens (see Chapter 3). Read served his articles from

1879 to 1882 and continued in the office until 1888, with one years break, when he joined H.M. Office of Works.⁸⁴

It was probably the absorbing nature of the work at Harrington Gardens that prompted George and Peto to employ the Bolton architect John Bradshaw Gass (1855-1939), to supervise the restoration and additions in that year, at Rawdon House, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire for Henry Ricardo. Gass had studied at Bolton School of Art before becoming a student, first at Owens College, Manchester and then at the RA School. After a period of teaching art and mathematics at a private school, Gass served his articles with his uncle, J.J. Bradshaw in Bolton, where he remained, 'having over three years the management of the office'.⁸⁵ On account of ill health, Gass undertook this less taxing work at Rawdon House for George and Peto. He remained in the office for that year, as an assistant before returning to Bolton in 1880, to enter partnership with his uncle, founding the firm Bradshaw and Gass, later Bradshaw, Gass and Hope.

It was undoubtedly the increase in pace of work which led to three more assistants being taken on before the move to Maddox Street. In 1882, work began at Buchan Hill, Sussex, followed in 1883, by Stoodleigh Court, Devon, and the Collingham Gardens speculation.

The three who joined in 1882/83 were Edward T. Boardman (d 1950) and the more celebrated E. Guy Dawber (1861-1938), and Arnold Mitchell (1863-1944). Boardman entered in 1882 for eighteen months, having qualified under his father Edward Boardman Senior of Norwich, to whom he returned as an assistant in 1884, before setting up his own practice in Norwich in 1889. George wrote to Boardman in 1898, congratulating him on full membership of the RIBA,

'I am sure that you will raise the standard of Fellowship, which is not very high at present.

Just after seeing you, I stayed at your big hotel⁸⁶ and allow me to say I was very pleased with the way all your work was carried through - it is pleasant and comely without being in any way fussy'.⁸⁷

E. Guy Dawber, like Boardman, hailed from Norfolk, from Kings Lynn, where he served his articles with William Adams. Having qualified in 1881, he entered the office of Sir Thomas Newenham Deane in Dublin. Whether or not due to the troubled times of the Land League and the

consequent stagnation of most business, Dawber moved to London and entered George and Peto's office in 1882, studying at the RA Schools in 1883, with R. Phéné Spiers amongst others, gaining the Lower School Premium in 1884 and Upper School Premium in 1885. Incessant work during the day and evenings began to ruin his eyesight, and so in 1886 he acted as Clerk of Works at 50 and 52 Cadogan Square. In 1888 he went in the same capacity to supervise the building of Batsford in Gloucestershire, a move which was to redirect his career. He found the gentle Cotswold landscape and his life there conducive and in 1890, he set up practice in Bourton-on-the-Hill,⁸⁸ twelve years before Ashbee moved to nearby Chipping Camden and three years before Gimson and the Barnsley Brothers moved to Pinbury, near Cirencester. Dawber enjoyed a highly successful career, with a clientele drawn from local gentry, over a period of forty years. He designed in a perfectly judged vernacular style, modified by Tudor, latterly showing an increasing preference for Neo-Georgian. All his work was informed by Cotswold vernacular, of which he had unrivalled knowledge, developed by having sketched and measured simple, unregarded houses in local villages. In 1891, he opened a London office, but retained his Gloucestershire connection, adapting local idioms well into the 1920s. When a later Lord Redesdale found George's Batsford too cumbersome a house, he turned to Dawber for the less pretentious, but less successful Swinbrooke House (see Chapter 5). George had a high regard for Dawber's work and also acknowledged his 'valuable literary contributions to the history of our art',⁸⁹ which included Old Cottages, Farmhouses and other Stone Buildings in the Cotswold District (1905)⁹⁰, a book which extolled that quiet and dignified seventeenth century tradition on which Newton, Lutyens and others drew so readily. Later knighted, Sir Guy became President of the RIBA in 1925-27 and a founder of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

Arnold Bidlake Mitchell had been articled to R. Stark Wilinon in Furnivals Inn EC. from 1880 to 1883, and assistant briefly to F. T. Baggallay before joining George and Peto in 1883. He went to work in the London School Board office, under T. J. Bailey, having travelled for over a year in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain and Malta. George remarked that he had known Mitchell since 1883 and had seen him frequently since and was, 'familiar with his work of which I have a

very favourable opinion'.⁹¹ Mitchell started what was to become a very large and varied practice at 16 Finsbury Circus in 1887. He later became an AA Silver Medallist, Pugin RIBA Silver Medallist and Soane Medallion winner. One of his important domestic commissions was Brook House, Park Lane, for Sir Ernest Cassel (for whom Harold Peto was to design a villa, Les Cedres, at Cap Ferrat), in 1923. A favourite with The Studio his early country houses often graced its pages during the first decade of the century. The houses in England, Scotland and Wales, favoured mostly symmetrical elements, and he seems to have been influenced by George's Neo-Georgian designs, such as Eastcote Lodge, Pinner (1888), though Mitchell preferred variations on the Arts and Crafts plan of long, thin rooms off corridor, favoured by Dawber and others. Mitchell's design for a house at Harrow of 1902⁹² drew heavily on George's gabled works, with their characteristic fenestration, treatment of tile hanging and picturesque quality.

Immediately after moving, George and Peto engaged John Flavel Curwen (1860-1932), as a draughtsman. Educated at Mill Hill School and articled to T. Lewis Banks from 1879 to 1883, Curwen had spent studying Public Health Acts and the Metropolitan Building Acts and their application at the District Surveyor's Office for St George's, Southwark and had spent the last six months before joining George and Peto in 1884, travelling and sketching Cathedral cities. Later in 1884 Curwen started his own practice near Red Hill, Surrey but moved to Highgate, Kendal, where his practice was chiefly concerned with the restoration of old houses and buildings in all parts of the country. Author of, Castles and Towers of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands, Curwen was a well respected archaeologist and scholar.⁹³

Herbert Baker (1862-1946), was the next to join the office in 1886, where he remained until 1890, starting his own practice, in March 1892, in Capetown, South Africa. While in his office, he additionally acted as Clerk of Works at Llanberis Church, North Wales, for nine months, spent two months sketching in Italy, two fortnights in France and a week in Holland (during the period of Collingham Gardens speculation of 1883-88). Baker wrote,

'I first became an improver and then a leading assistant in the office of Ernest George and Peto, designers of many mansions, who filled the gap in the procession of architects between the greater Norman Shaw and Edwin Lutyens. Invaluable to me was all I learnt from them and their able assistants Guy Dawber, Herbert Read and Weir Schultz'.⁹⁴

Baker first met Lutyens at Maddox Street. Baker was one of the most successful architects of no fixed principle, at the turn of the century; only Lutyens outstripped him in Establishment acclaim. After emigrating to South Africa, Baker met Cecil Rhodes, under whose patronage he gained much official work. Baker worked in many styles, notably a heavy, stripped classicism enlivened by ornament executed by local craftsmen. By the time he was forty, he had designed three Cathedrals, Government House and the Union Buildings in Pretoria. His domestic, rather than public work, showed the influence of George. Just as Gertrude Jekyll was to ^{greatly} influence Lutyens's development, so Rhodes played the same role for Baker. Both clients shared a single mindedness and the deep love of the tradition of simple products of country people. Just as Gertrude Jekyll introduced Lutyens to the traditional buildings, gardens and furniture of Surrey, so Rhodes introduced Baker to Cape Dutch buildings, furniture and silver, which in those days were scorned by the average English settler as boorish and provincial. Groote Schuur (1893) was Rhodes's attempt to recreate a house which would remind white South Africans of their early heritage. Indeed there was only flimsy evidence based on a single watercolour sketch of the original house of 1832, to warrant the substantiation of the adoption of a 'Cape Dutch Style', since the house had been flat roofed with a colonnade between two projecting wings. However Baker had come straight from George's office, perhaps intoxicated by the Dutch Renaissance, an intoxication shared by Rhodes for different more emotive reasons. The result of the redesigning of Groote Schuur by Baker is a rich confection of gables and Cape Dutch recollections. The interior, however, owes a direct debt to George and Peto who had never, in their interiors, turned to the simple and neat Dutch models, but rather to a more heady lavish style derived from the aristocratic interiors of medieval France or Tudor England. Such was the character of the interiors produced by the firm during the period of Baker's being an assistant;⁵² Cadogan Square (1886), Glencot (1887), Batsford (1888), Shiplake (1889), all of which showed a respect for sound craftsmanship and high quality materials. While many of George's pupils went on to produce simpler versions of Tudor detailing, Baker's interior at Groote Schuur reflects to a considerable degree, the richness largely favoured by George and Peto - Tudor scroll moulds in fireplaces that purport to be classical, deep beaming to all the

rooms and elaborate moulding and panelling. Baker returned to England before the war to run a large and varied practice. Although his larger commissions were usually Neo-Classical, he never lost sight of George's practice of respecting the context of his buildings. He also invariably introduced a profusion of sculptured detail, as at South Africa House (1935), a last echo of the belief in free craftsmanship learnt in the 1880s.

Robert Weir Schultz: (1860-1951), was a Scot who trained in Edinburgh under the Scottish luminary Sir R. Rowand Anderson, from C.1878 to 1884, when he turned his eyes to London. His entry into Shaw's office in January 1884 was auspiciously timed, that being the year of the foundation of the Art Workers' Guild by five members, or former members of Shaw's office. Schultz moved, in the spring of 1886, to George and Peto at the height of their work in South Kensington. Schultz, who doubtless brought some of the intense seriousness of approach from Shaw, was not immune to the more picturesque bias of Maddox Street. He retained an affection for shaped gables, which were to appear frequently in his work, despite his being a doctrinaire Arts and Crafts thinker,⁹⁵

'Although . . . a vigorous Art Workers' Guild member (from 1891), a lecturer and writer on his favourite theme 'Reason in Building', he had learnt (possibly from George) to compromise and this led to the success of his own practice'. 96

The range of his work extended from the inflated vernacular style of Scalpers Hill, Cobham, Kent (1899-1901), and How Green House, Hever, Kent (1904-05), to the 'Wrenaissance' at Pickenham Hall, Norfolk (1902-05), and the gabled Tudor of St Anne's Hospital, Canford Cliffs, Bournemouth, Dorset (1909-1912), which,

'with its bending, changeful, light-filled corridors and its careful maximization of sun and view for patients . . . demonstrated what freedom the Arts and Crafts Movement could bring to large buildings when it was given the chance'. 97

The exterior, like some other Schultz buildings was in an austere Queen Anne with big Dutch gables, topping bays, all executed in simple straightforward brickwork with stone dressings. The arrangement of bays is reminiscent of George and Yeates's design for Busbridge Hall (1906), although the latter showed the gables placed between the bays, rather than surmounting them.

C.H.Reilly recalled that he and his colleague Detmar Blow,

'made many plans and discussed the relative values of Norman Shaw's, Ernest George's, Aston Webb's and John Belcher's offices to an assistant, endlessly and hopelessly'. 98

They chose Belcher's, where they found themselves

'in a new atmosphere where architecture could be discussed all day long until it was displaced by gossip about Ernest George's office and the strange young man there named Lutyens who was beginning to get more jobs on his own account than his master, or about Aston Webb's office with its fifty draughtsmen which we considered in our superior ^{opinion} a mere factory for government buildings.' 99^L

Between 1887 and 1889 a steady stream of potential talent flowed into the office, headed by the somewhat reluctant Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869-1944). Anxious to enter Shaw's office, but finding the waiting list too long, Lutyens, at the age of eighteen and having already spent two years at the South Kensington School of Art, had to be content to begin his training, in late 1887, as a paying apprentice in the office of George and Peto.

Herbert Baker, at that time the leading assistant, recalled that Lutyens,

'though joking through his short pupilage, quickly absorbed all that was best worth learning; he puzzled us at first, but we soon found that he seemed to know by intuition some great truths of our art which were not to be learnt there'. 100

Lutyens made important friends of assistants in the office, principally Baker, Dawber and Schultz, but, by all accounts cultivated an amused contempt for professionalism and a scorn for the futility of sketchbooks, preferring to commit everything to memory. This contrariness was doubtless encouraged by George's prolific sketching and basing of his designs on foreign prototypes. James Lees-Milne, recalling Darcy Braddell's reminiscences of George, quotes,

'George would draw every detail of his designs for a room or building for his faithful carver to reproduce. He would lie full length on the floor, rapidly and accurately sketching. When commissioned to design a building, he would ask what style was required - Gothic? Queen Anne? Jacobean? Not a thing done today fortunately. Braddell said that the more cultivated academically educated an architect, the worse he was, and the less creative - vide, George, Blomfield, Baker...' 101

Hussey quotes Lutyens as saying that, in the 1880s George was,

'a distinguished architect who took each year three weeks' holiday abroad and returned with overflowing sketch books. When called on for a project he would look through these and choose some picturesque turret or gable from Holland, France or Spain and round it weave his new design. Location mattered little and no provincial formation influenced him, for at that time terra-cotta was the last word in building'. . 102

This was somewhat ungenerous, since despite his cavalier and somewhat dismissive approach to his years spent at Maddox Street (from late 1887 until early 1889), Lutyens owed George a greater debt than he cared to admit. George's skill as an artist and draughtsman did not elude Lutyens. George's soft sepia pen and wash technique was well suited to conveying natural textures, such as brick, tile and oak - and above all, well suited to creating the impression that buildings were long established in the countryside. George also angled his buildings from a low view-point, a habit adopted by Lutyens who characteristically called it a 'worm's eye view'. Lutyen's drawing technique, criticised in his early years as being 'crude', ¹⁰³ improved dramatically at Maddox Street. He learnt to sketch in perspective and compose drawings sensitively and picturesquely. During the late 1880s George and Peto's practice was at its most prolific, producing designs not only for large country houses (see Chapter 5), but also for a plethora of small domestic works (see Chapter 4); all of which displayed a mature reticence and would have provided ready prototypes for Lutyens to study. Whether unconsciously or not, Lutyens seemed sensitive and responsive to George's love of quality and craftsmanship, of good, old work and natural textures of brick, oak and tile. Details of doors, verandahs, bay windows and chimneys favoured by George recur in Lutyens early work, for example, in his designs for The Corner, Thursley, Surrey for Edmund Gray (1888). The debt is further revealed by a comparison of George's Hillier Almshouses at Guildford (1878), and Lutyens's designs for gatehouses at Park Hatch, Surrey (1890). The commission in 1889, to design Crooksbury House, Farnham, Surrey for Arthur W. Chapman, enabled Lutyens to leave George and Peto and establish his own practice. The commission was to last until 1914 and it encapsulates the changing nature of Lutyens's style up to that date. The early parts bear a striking resemblance to the work of George, in their arrangement of windows,

bays and chimneys and use of materials. Indeed, many of Lutyens's early works reflect this influence, such as the unexecuted design for a studio in Wetherby Place, London (1891), for Frederick Lutyens, The Tilford Institute, Tilford, Surrey (1893), while appropriately evoking the half timber work of Speke Hall, Liverpool (the client, Mrs Anderson was one of the Liverpool ship owning families), owes a debt to George's Red Cottage at Harpenden (1888).

By 1896 the overt influence of George was less apparent. Lutyens's fertile creativity began to extend the possibilities offered by vernacular styles in far more adventurous and idiosyncratic directions. Tigbourne Court, near Whiteley, Surrey (1899-1901), exemplifies this originality. Its highly sophisticated use of rustic material suited perfectly contemporary taste, which was tiring of *laissez-aller* irregularity in building, but was not generally ready for any revival of rigorous classicism. The Farnham Liberal Club (1894-95), and the additions to Crooksbury House, Farnham (1898), in a formal red brick Georgian style showed Lutyens to be equally capable of extending and exploiting other idioms. Indeed he was to embrace the principles of classical style and planning, prompted by the examples of the late seventeenth century house and the wider movement towards English Renaissance discussed in Chapter 6.

Alfred H. Hart (1866-1953), Percy L. Waterhouse (1864-1932), later Hart's partner and Francis William Bedford (1866-1904), also entered the office in 1887. Hart had been articled to James Edmeston in 1882. He attended various classes and lectures at the AA and was admitted to the RA School, where he worked for a full period of six years, winning the RA Gold medal in Architecture in 1891. In 1887 he was 'engaged' with George until 1893, during which time he travelled for short periods in England and France, studying, drawing and measuring buildings. In June 1887, shortly after joining the office, he went to Belgium, as a travelling student of the AA. He recalled,

'With the aid of my friends, I got together a good deal of information about the part I had determined to visit, which lay in the north eastern district of Belgium'. 104

His travels to Bruges, Ghent, Malines, Antwerp, Aerschot, Sichein, Diest (where he visited the Beguinage), Tirlemont, Louvain and Brussels, would undoubtedly have been encouraged by George and Peto, themselves

early pilgrims to Holland and Belgium (see Chapter 3), and who, in 1887, were contemplating the development at Collingham Gardens. During his year's tour, Hart also visited Holland, Germany and Switzerland. He began his own practice in 1894, later forming a partnership with Waterhouse. Also associated with Sir Herbert Baker in the reconstruction of the Royal Empire Society's Headquarters, Hart designed numerous private houses in different parts of the country, particularly at Enfield.¹⁰⁵

Waterhouse, born in Hobart, Tasmania, graduated from Christ Church, Cambridge in 1886, with a degree in mathematics. He then spent a year with J.G.Sankey as the Pugin student. The first four months of 1887 were spent at the South Kensington School of Art, before going to Maddox Street as an assistant. He remained there until 1889 when he moved to the office of J.Osborne Smith.¹⁰⁶

Bedford was from a prosperous Leeds family and had been articled in 1884 to William H.Thorp of Leeds, before entering George and Peto's office as an assistant, in 1887. A quiet man, slow of speech, he studied at the AA and RA Schools and Westminster School of Art. Of undoubted artistic talent, he was awarded the Silver Medal in the Soane Competition, the Asphital Prize and Owen Jones travelling scholarship, in 1890. In 1891 he spent nine months sketching in Italy and Sicily, before commencing practice in Leeds the following year with the exuberant and wealthy Sidney Kitson (1871-1937), ex-Charterhouse and Cambridge, who had been articled to E.J.May. Bedford and Kitson were influential in shaping the suburbs of Leeds, as was Bidlake in Birmingham. Muthesius commented that,

'their exteriors are more or less traditional in design, but inside they experiment in more independent ways, though without being fantastic... and give an impression of quiet refinement'.¹⁰⁷

They were free eclectics, drawing on both local and southern models, but were early advocates of the reintroduction of classical idioms. As early as 1902/3, they were producing houses of the quality of Red House, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, where a quiet, simple brick Neo-Georgian conceals a bold plan designed around a big, two-storey living room, with overhead fanlight in the centre of the house. Their partnership was dissolved early in 1904. Bedford left for London to set up an independent practice, but died before Christmas, at the early age of thirty-eight.¹⁰⁸ Kitson gradually devoted himself to scholarship and collecting, retiring early.

More assistants arrived in 1888, Herbert Hardy Wigglesworth (1866-1949), had been a pupil of Messrs Mathews and McKenzie in Aberdeen, from 1883 to 1888, before spending nearly three years with George and Peto from 1888 to 1891 as an assistant. After leaving the office, he travelled to Italy, France, Belgium and Germany for about two months at a time, before going to New York as an assistant to George Postery. He set up his own practice in Westminster in 1893, with Dundee born David Barkley Niven (1864-1942), a product of Aston Webb's office. The firm produced elegant and changeful house designs during the 1890s many of which were presented in Niven's beautiful perspectives in The Studio. Harold Falkner (1875-1963), joined them as a junior partner, sometime after completing his articles with Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1896, and work appeared in the Architectural Review and Academy Architecture, by Niven, Wigglesworth and Falkner. The style of these houses was invariably a free Tudor with gables. Falkner set up on his own in 1902/1903, his forte becoming Neo-Georgian houses, three of which, in Farnham, appeared in Sir Lawrence Weaver's, Small Country Houses of Today, Volume 11.¹⁰⁹ After the turn of the century, Niven and Wigglesworth's practice acquired a good deal of city work, which was mostly Neo-Georgian for example Hambro's Bank, Bishopsgate. Wigglesworth's designs for the Swedish Chamber of Commerce and the Swedish Church, Harcourt Street, Marylebone, London (except facade), earned him the Order of Vasa from the King of Sweden. The partnership was dissolved in 1927, and thereafter, Wigglesworth collaborated with A.G.R. Mackenzie.¹¹⁰

Arthur Conrad Blomfield (1863-1935), Reginald Blomfield's cousin, was educated at Haileybury and Trinity College, Cambridge. He travelled around for two years, studying architecture, before serving articles with his father, Sir Arthur Blomfield ARA, from October 1884 to October 1887. He joined George and Peto in 1888, spending a year at Maddox Street, before joining his brother and father in the practice, Sir A.W. Blomfield and Sons, in London. After their father's death the brothers carried on an extensive business in which church work was predominant, until 1914. Arthur Blomfield served as Architect to the Bank of England and to Edward VII at Sandringham.¹¹¹

In 1889 Alfred Bowman Yeates, another product of Haileybury, joined the firm as an Improver; he was subsequently taken into partnership in 1892 (see Chapter 6).

William Henry Ward (1865-1924), was engaged in 1892 as an Improver. Ward, educated at Repton and Claire College, Cambridge, was the son of a Buckinghamshire vicar and a pupil of Sir Arthur Blomfield from 1890 to 1892. It was perhaps the latter who directed him in his son's footsteps to George and Yeates, where Ward stayed for eighteen months, after which he worked as a draughtsman for Lutyens, from 1894 to 1898, winning the RIBA Silver Medal 1895. A great admirer of Renaissance art, he practised in Keswick for many years despite ill health. ¹¹²

A remarkable addition to the office, in 1892, was Ethel Mary Charles (1871-1962), who was articled to George and Yeates for three years. She was the first woman to be elected as a member of the RIBA. In 1893, she and her sister, Bessa Ada, tried to become members of the AA to attend evening classes. A special meeting was convened to consider their application which was considered to be a threat to a hitherto exclusively male stronghold. They were refused admission. George was responsible for calling the meeting and is likely to have supported the sisters, since he was later to support the admission of ladies to the RIBA. In his vote of thanks to George for his Presidential address in 1908, Sir Aston Webb remarked on George's having helped the cause,

'You were, I believe, the first and the boldest, to take two lady pupils into your office. They became associates of the Institute, and we gave them votes! I attribute it very much to your action that we are able to enjoy the presence of ladies here tonight without any fear of chains clanging and bells ringing, or any need of the protection of the police'. ¹¹³

In 1895, Ethel Charles entered two schemes for the Building News, Designing Club competitions. Although one was unplaced, the other, a design for a block of three labourers' cottages, won second prize. In reviewing the designs, the Building News, made the comment that,

'the only true way of arriving at good cottage designs ... was to adopt the vernacular style, to simply depend on the countryside simplicity and hedgerow ideas'. ¹¹⁴

Her design,

'exhibits Wickharnica's (her pseudonym) taste and knowledge of cottage architecture and how the old Sussex men used to build under the shadow of the South Down'. ¹¹⁵

The materials chosen were indigenous to Sussex, flint walling, red brick

quoins, with roughcast gables. The designs owe much to George and Peto's work in the 1880s and early 1890s.

Ethel Charles passed the RIBA examinations in December 1898, and her sister likewise in 1900. They practised together from 'York Street Chambers', in London, in a block of flats designed by Thackeray Turner specifically to provide accommodation for professional women. Much of their work was executed in Falmouth, Cornwall, and consisted of designs for houses, cottages, alterations and additions. Their vernacular style was understated and consistent. The influence of George is indisputable; tile-hung elevations are expressed with drainpipes and wooden verandahs, and gables and chimneys feature strongly in the designs - all in the George manner.

Probably in the summer of 1892,¹¹⁶ when the staff were taking their holidays, Stanley Davenport Adshead (1868-1946), joined the office for two months. Later Professor Adshead, he was one of the future luminaries of the town planning movement and first holder of the Chair of Design at Liverpool University.¹¹⁷ Architect, planner, writer and teacher, Adshead was the son of a painter, a Manchester Academician. Having failed to 'secure a stool' in the office of Alfred Waterhouse,¹¹⁸ he was articled for some years, in 1885, to Manchester architect, Medland Taylor whom he described as,

'a relic from the Dickens era: an architect who built churches for a rapidly declining industrial laity, who were departing this life or leaving the industrial North for pleasanter places in the South... Occasionally he built houses, and on one occasion he was commissioned to build a block of offices for a rich firm; here there was money to be spent, so he had a building designed in the Dutch style, with curly gables and copings in red terracotta. This was about the time when his contemporary Ernest George was introducing Dutch architecture into this country'.¹¹⁹

On completion of his articles, Adshead turned down the offer of a permanent place with Medland Taylor and instead joined the Manchester office of Salomon and Eli,¹²⁰ where he remained for a year as a paid assistant. In mid-1890 he left for London and secured a position with George Sherrin from 1843 to 1909 in Finsbury Circus,¹²¹ moving in 1892 to Dunn and Watson for a short time and thence to an architect named Ince. The latter was employed at that time, building a studio for the sculptor Gilbert, in Maida Vale. Soon afterwards Adshead spent six

weeks with Guy Dawber,

'At that time he had set up a private practice in an office in Buckingham Street, Strand. He was very anxious and very quick',

recalled Adshead,

'and most particular about the working details. I felt that there was not the artistic atmosphere that pervaded Sherrin's office'. 122

Adshead and his fellow assistant from Sherrin's office, Edwin A. Rickards (1872-1920), then spent some time working in the evenings as 'experts' for an architect of 'innumerable chapels',¹²³ who had his office full of cheap assistants. 'But at about this time', recalls Adshead,

'I answered an advertisement for temporary assistants and by no less an architect than Ernest George ... I remember there were about half a dozen premiated improvers and one or two paid assistants. Amongst the latter was Herbert Baker, later to become famous. They seemed to spend half their time throwing dusters at one another between visits from EG and the manager, who attended to quantities, and various Clerks of Works when they came to the office to receive instructions...

Ernest George, later to become Sir Ernest George RA, was, I consider, one of the cleverer architects of his day. He was the only man who could work in the Dutch Tudor manner and get the spirit of it in the materials available at the time. His Dutch architecture, which he introduced into this country was very successful'. 124

After leaving George, Adshead entered the office of William Flockhart, before setting up his own practice in Bedford Row in 1898. Adshead was a celebrated perspectivist. C.H. Reilly recalls how,

'one night Joass, himself an Owen Jones prizeman, and one of the best colourists among the younger men, invited me to his rooms, and told me that my friend Rickards, who was to be there, was bringing round an even better draughtsman than himself. I was all agog. In my enthusiasm for Rickards, I could not believe such a one existed. However, little Rickards arrived with a tall, gaunt, young man, well over six feet, who said very little, but when he did reduced even Rickards's volubility to silence. This was Adshead'. 125

Despite his success as an architect, Adshead continued to execute perspectives for other architects. Of considerable interest is the fact that in 1901, he drew the perspective for George's unsuccessful competition entry for the Buckingham Palace forecourt.¹²⁶ This is

of significance given the changing attitudes towards the perspective developing within the architectural profession. As the appeal of the French educational system of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris gathered strength (see Chapter 8), so the systematized method of drawing which the French imposed, gathered supporters in England. A taste developed for the 'Beaux-Arts style' rendered elevations and sections.

An advocate of a more formalised system of architectural drawing, instead of the more artistic variety practised in England, had always been R. Phéné Spiers, who had been trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and who was a Master of the RA School of Architecture from 1870 until 1906. Spiers had lectured to the Architectural Association on the subject in 1874 and in 1887 published a valuable, systematised manual on Architectural Drawing for students. Although Spiers illustrated perspectives, by, amongst others, Thomas Allom, Norman Shaw and Ernest George ¹²⁷, the emphasis was on the production of accurate, comprehensible geometrical drawings. Spiers had, in fact, proposed George for Fellowship of the RIBA in 1880, stating,

'I am well acquainted with the drawings prepared for exhibition at the Royal Academy of the other works referred to in his list. Both design and drawing (done by himself!) is of a high artistic character'. ¹²⁸

In the 1880s, the general consensus amongst the profession was at odds with Spiers's view about the superiority of the French system, pointing to the 'flatness and mechanical finishes of much French architecture compared with the variety and sculptural vigour of the best English work'. ¹²⁹ However, by the turn of the century the tide of opinion was changing, further encouraged by the enthusiasm amongst younger architects for the large-scale monumentality of classical buildings, in reaction to the chaotic picturesque eclecticism of the 1880s. Such attitudes can be detected in several of George's pupils and assistants. Adshead, despite being so accomplished a perspectivist, wrote to the RIBA Journal in 1907, supporting 'a uniform and traditional manner of drawing'. He argued,

'It is quite evident, that at no period did architecture depend so much for its proper realization and execution as the present upon draughtsmanship. Years ago every architect was a master craftsman; today he is a

scholar. The time was when draughtsmanship held a position of secondary importance; but nowadays, when an exact conception, complete to the minutest detail has not only to be evolved, but accurately set down in concrete form (before in many cases the architect has seen the site) draughtsmanship has become an accomplishment of very great importance and requires to be of a very high order. The change ought not to have had such a bad effect on architecture, but I am afraid that such is the case. Not only is architecture controlled too much by draughtsmanship, in the sense that its effect is insufficiently considered as seen in bricks and stone, so to speak, but it undoubtedly suffers through eccentricities in manner and style which unconsciously translate themselves into eccentric architecture'. 130

In 1900, George submitted a series of elevational drawings for the Strand/Holborn Scheme Competition; this was doubtless a requirement of the competition, where anonymity was sought. He was to do likewise for the London County Council County Hall Competition of 1908. However, in 1901 he drew two perspectives for the Queen Victoria Memorial Scheme. one of the Triumphal Arch, the other the view from St James Park into Green Park, employing Adshead to draw the perspective of Buckingham Palace Forecourt, perhaps recognising that his own, characteristic style would militate against capturing the intended monumentality of his scheme. Adshead was to become one of the luminaries of the town planning movement and first holder of the Chair of Design at Liverpool University.

John James Joass (1868-1952), joined George and Yeates in September 1893, presumably as an assistant. Born the same year as Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Joass was an emigr  from the office of J.J.Burnet and Sons (a Scottish equivalent to London offices, in terms of prestige), where he had started as an office boy, progressing rapidly while studying part-time at the Glasgow School of Art. C.1890 Joass won and accepted a place with the leading Edinburgh architect, Dr Rowand Anderson, from January 1890 to July 1893. A fine draughtsman and landscape watercolourist, Joass stayed with George until June 1894 after which he sat present with E.J.May'¹³¹ and 'spent several weeks in travelling each summer in England and Scotland'.¹³² The Pugin student in 1892, Owen Jones student in 1894, he qualified in 1894. George, in proposing Joass for membership of

the RIBA commented, 'I know him to be highly qualified for membership of the RIBA and that he is of exceptional ability'.¹³³

In 1898, Joass entered into partnership with John Belcher (A. Beresford Pite having been Belcher's partner from 1885 until 1897), forming one of the most interesting and successful partnerships of the period.¹³⁴

From 1894 to the turn of the century, there appear to have been fewer, well-known figures in the office, the result, presumably, of a lower volume of work undertaken by the partnership (see Chapter 6).

C.1895,¹³⁵ George's son Allan (1874-1961), entered the office. Born the year before his mother's death, Allan was educated at Blundell's and studied at the RA School, winning the Gold Medal in 1898 with a design for a 'nobleman's country house'. He was well established when Darcy Braddell entered Maddox Street in October 1902 who in recalling his first day in the drawing office said,

'There were three men present in it, and the youngest of the trio came forward to greet me. He had the easy carriage and well-made supple figure of the good athlete, which he was¹³⁶, and looked for all the world like an officer of the Regular Army, home on furlough. He was beautifully turned out in that unassuming style, which, in those days meant the patronage of the pick of tailors, bootmakers and hosiers. 'I am EG.'s son - Allan', he said with a smile which showed good white teeth under a close-clipped moustache, 'you must be Braddell, Let me introduce you to Ernest Major, head draughtsman, and Gould, our manager'.¹³⁷

Allan George was to remain until 1911, when he emigrated to Canada. After working in the offices of Darlington, Pearson, Sproatt and Rolph, he joined Walter Moorhouse in 1913, a partnership which was to last forty seven years with gaps during World Wars I and II. A distinguished architect (elected FRIBA 1930, Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in 1944, and an honorary member of the Ontario Association of Architects in February 1961), rather naturally he was the most tenacious in terms of perpetuating his father's traditional approach, even in the face of progressive changes in architectural thinking of the 1920s and 1930s, apparently finding it hard to turn from such traditional patterns to the more uninhibited forms of modern architecture. 'Above all things', wrote Moorhouse, 'he hated self-conscious attempts at originality'.¹³⁸ His qualities of humanity, courtesy and sincerity appear to have

competed for supremacy with his architectural achievements. George and Moorcroft's practice was wide ranging, domestic, ecclesiastical, collegiate and commercial, the highpoints being in the 1920s and 1930s, although commissions still appear in the 1950s.

Strachan Hall and residential additions to Trinity College, Toronto (1941) (built originally in 1852 by Kivas Tally),¹³⁹ in a Jacobean style in a simpler manner than that of the original, bear witness to Allan's debt to his father. Strachan Hall recalls much of George's restrained country house work at Glencot (1886), and Batsford (1888), and other work of the 1880s, with its manorial window and hammerbeam trussed roof and internal panelling, reminiscent of halls at Stoodleigh Court (1883), Motcombe (1893), and Foxcombe (1902). The additions had to conform to the original and so prescribed Jacobean, but the attention to detail and craftsmanship in choosing stone walling and slates to match existing work and in most cases, using the same quarries, showed the influence and concerns of his father. The earlier Toronto Stock Exchange of 1936,¹⁴⁰ however, showed him responding to architectural trends of the 1930s with its rational, stripped classicism. The sculpted freize, by Charles Comfort, was mindful of Art Deco and represented the major industries of Canada. While the Toronto Stock Exchange was the last word in modern equipment and operational methods, it nevertheless had its roots in the sound tradition of British financial institutions. Presumably in order to symbolise this fact the executive offices on the third floor were designed in traditional style, which was Allan George's forte. The two period rooms were panelled to the ceiling in fine grain quarter cut, white oak, finished to a grey tone and the plaster ceilings were enriched, and, altogether more sober, reflect Ernest George's influence.

In October 1902, Thomas Arthur Darcy Braddell entered the office. the son of Sir Thomas Braddell, the Chief Judicial Commissioner for the Malay States, he was educated at St Paul's and it was thought by his father, destined to follow a career in the law. Anxious to become an architect, he was recommended to apply to George by a family friend who had frequent professional dealings with the firm. Braddell described George, then in his sixties, on their first meeting as,

'dressed in a blue serge suit and standing before a narrow oak table on which lay a large drawing. He wore a fairly close-clipped beard which had turned quite white, accentuating the brown of the face which it

framed and in which was set a pair of the brightest and purest blue eyes I have ever seen in my life. . . there was something inexpressibly alert, bright and birdlike in his personality . . . although kindly disposed' ,

Braddell continued, George

' was not an easy talker. He did not give himself freely to anyone, certainly not to me. He wasted very few words, speaking in short, pithy sentences, but always very much to the point. In spite of this handicap from my point of view, our meeting went very well. After listening to my story he agreed that he would take me in the following October'. 141

Braddell was to develop a successful practice, attracting largely domestic commissions.

Other pupils C.1902 included John Reynolds,

'an extraordinarily amusing character, and when in the mood would play the fool to his heart's content, and the unconcealed delight of the office boys'. 142

Braddell recalled,

'He once draped an entire roll of toilet paper in Italianate festoons round the walls of Yeates's room during the latter's absence on a country job, expressing surprise and considerable disappointment when he learned that it had all been cleared away by the charwoman the following morning. He subsequently abandoned architecture to work for the Royal Geographical Society'. 143

Martin Shaw Briggs (1882-1977), a Yorkshireman, was articled to George's one-time assistant Frank Bedford and his partner Sidney Kitson, from 1901 to 1904, during which time he spent two and a half days a week at the Leeds School of Art, studying antique and life drawing. Together with his fellow pupils, Proctor and Thorp, Briggs migrated to London in 1904 to gain wider experience. Thanks to an introduction from Bedford, Briggs was engaged as a junior assistant at Maddox Street. He recalled being paid 'the princely salary of 35s. a week', despite having just passed the RIBA Final. Briggs and Carey were both hired to work on 'some terrific commission for a titled client', but this fell through and they were sacked only two or three months after they had arrived. 144

Braddell said of Briggs,

'he was industrious and very keen on his profession. Unlike me, he talked very little and gave full value for whatever wage he earned. He had already begun to write and was instrumental in making one realise what an appalling amount there is to be learnt on the history of architecture and relatively what a very little of it the average architect ever troubles himself to discover. He had a dry wit, as anyone can see for himself who reads his scholarly books'. 145

Carey, to whom Briggs and Braddell refer in their reminiscences, was Raymond Carey, little known, since he left the country while still in his twenties.

'He came to us from C.F.A.Voysey, whose pupil he had been, via Leonard Stokes. He was very far from being a scholar, but had, I think, the best inborn taste of almost anyone I have ever come across in my life. He drew far better than most, but seldom well enough to satisfy his own fastidious and exacting standards. I often wonder how the riches of Ernest George's practice, the elaboration of design in everything he touched, must have struck Carey after the almost childish simplicity of Voysey's standards'. 146

Others who passed through the office in the 1890s and early 1900s included Dan Gibson who worked as an assistant before returning to the Lake District to recuperate after a serious illness. In 1898 he formed a partnership with the landscape gardener Thomas H.Mawson (1861-1933), which lasted for two years. Mawson recalled,

'it was our success that finally led to its dissolution. My idea in seeking the partnership was to secure by our joint efforts a higher degree of architectural expression in the gardens which I planned. I had at this time no thought of proceeding beyond the legitimate limits of landscape architecture, but such were Gibson's genius and skill in every department of applied design, than no sooner had he made the round of my clients, than he was busy with every conceivable kind of speciality undertaken by any architect, ecclesiastical, domestic, and garden designs, along with designs for furniture, decorations, bookbinding and jewellery, jostled one another, and, as I feared, sometimes under pressure of work relegating garden designs to a secondary place. In addition, he collected for my clients, china, furniture, silver, pewter, tapestries, prints and miniatures, and every other imaginable artistic antique. His knowledge of these matters was wide and extensive, he having spent what veritably amounted to

years of his life at the South Kensington, the Wallace, and other collections; and in addition, he seemed to have an instinct for discovering the genuine example'. 147

Gibson, by all accounts a handsome and courtly man, clearly learned much from George about the wider responsibilities of the architect, and the importance of the relationship between house and garden. As has already been discussed, George, Peto and Yeates were all avid collectors of furniture, tapestries, carved stone and woodwork, pictures and objets d'art, particularly of the medieval and Renaissance periods (See Chapter 2, and Redroofs, Chapter 5). Yeates had a particularly fine, specialist collection of pewter which he bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Aside from his ideas on the role that he believed antiques should play in interior schemes, George, and indeed his partners were in touch with antique dealers, collected on their travels abroad, and were friendly with other informed collectors and historians, such as Percy Macquoid. Furthermore, as Braddell recalled,

'Ernest George's office, in my time, still kept up a tradition of many years' standing of being actively interested patrons of the antique dealer. It was no uncommon thing for a dealer to arrive with perhaps a Persian rug or two, a dozen or so Delft plates, a pair of famille-rose vases which he would try to unload first on Ernest George himself, and then, if unsuccessful in that quarter, on the 'young gentlemen' in the drawing office'. 148

Such practice must have influenced the pupils and assistants, and must have particularly appealed to those such as Gibson.

In his collaborative work with Mawson in 1898 and 1899, Gibson attended to all the architectural work, Mawson to the garden planning. The latter recalled,

'we both gained much by our collaboration - I by gaining a much wider appreciation of architectural detail, and Gibson by a widened grasp of the fundamentals of composition'. 149

Their jointly designed schemes included Flagstaff, Colwyn Bay, Wales, for Walter Whitehead; a formal garden at Ashton-on-Ribble, Lancashire for W.W. Galloway; a house and garden at Brockhole, Windermere, Westmorland for W. Gaddum.¹⁵⁰ and Gibson designed Nirket House, Winster, Lancashire.¹⁵¹ Mawson recalled a new house at Wood, South Tawton, Devon,

'where together we planned the house, garden, park, the home farm buildings, the decorative furniture, he (Gibson) even going to the extent of selecting the silver, china and linen'. 152

Born in London, but brought up in Worcestershire, James Alfred Swan (1874-1952), was trained at Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts. Articled to T.W.F. Newton of Birmingham, Swan travelled in Europe, developing his skills as a watercolourist. Clearly influenced by Samuel Prout, he specialised in street scenes with examples of medieval architecture, some of his representations of Flemish and German house fronts appearing in the architectural journals in the early 1900 s. Swan acquired his practical experience in London, first at Maddox Street, where he was probably an assistant, and then in Beresford Pite's office, where he became chief draughtsman for a time. He returned to Birmingham, where he gained a reputation for ecclesiastical work, although his practice, which was to continue for over fifty years, handled a variety of domestic, educational, brewery and restoration work.¹⁵³

Herbert Winkler Wills (-1937), who had been articled to H.C. Boyes in 1882, and had spent some time in the office of McKim, Mead and White, also worked at Maddox Street, before setting up in practice in The Adelphi. He was later to edit The Architect.¹⁵⁴

James Strong (-1920)¹⁵⁵ later to practise in Chester, and David Kennedy, also worked at Maddox Street for short periods.

George Drysdale (1881-1949), a Northumbrian, entered his office as an assistant for six months in 1906, having served his articles and three further years in the office of Leonard Stokes. The Pugin Student in 1906, the Tite Prizewinner and Soane Medallionist in 1908, Drysdale claimed with North Country directness, 'that Stokes was a great architect, a much better one than Ernest George',¹⁵⁶ which opinion Braddell recalls, 'was thought by me the most monstrous heresy on his part'.¹⁵⁷ It was Drysdale who widened Braddell's outlook, the latter admitting,

'Up till Drysdale's arrival my outlook on the function of an architect was strictly limited and almost entirely governed by the methods which Ernest George used.. Drysdale, however, had other views about architecture and it was he who impressed upon me that planning it in its widest sense, was the real key to fine architecture', 158

a dictum, which has been seen, was more widely accepted subsequently. Braddell, however, always maintained an interest in picturesque architectural draughtsmanship throughout his career. Not surprisingly, Drysdale's zeal for planning led him to attend the École des Beaux-Arts, and to study in Italy. He started practice in London in 1911, but in 1916 went to Canada for three years to work on plans for the new Houses of Parliament in Ottawa. Taken into partnership by Leonard Stokes on his return to London, Drysdale succeeded to the practice after Stokes's death in 1925, continuing until 1942. From 1924 to 1947 he was Director of Birmingham School of Architecture. Always well-informed on current European and American work, he always retained a profound respect for the logic of the French, developing the Beaux-Arts methods at the Birmingham School with great success. Drysdale practised latterly with Arthur Ledoyen in Edgbaston, Birmingham, until his death in 1947. 159

George's pupils learned to value high quality, not only in design and planning, but also in craftsmanship, materials and all aspects of the applied arts. Importantly, they were also provided with a sound, practical grounding which looked to the realistic concerns of the profession. This ensured that they excelled in attracting and securing clients and completing work satisfactorily. This in turn ensured a wide variety of commissions. This training and experience provided a basis essential to all, even to those who were to develop more progressive ideas after leaving the office. Dawber best captured the spirit of George's office philosophy,

'He had the power, in his quiet, unassuming way, of inspiring his pupils and assistants with a great love of architecture, and although he seldom talked about it yet the force of his example, his high ideals in art and his ceaseless and untiring energy, infected us all with his spirit and enthusiasm'. 160

In turn, George took an immense pride in the success of his office,

'After a fair term of practice it is a pleasure to think of the many able young men of the past and present who have been associated with us. It is gratifying too, to find how many are already our rivals, getting work to do on their own account, and doing it well'. 161

That George's pupils and assistants were able to build up such highly successful practices, must in part, be attributed to the nature and quality of their training.

Public and Professional Circles

Public and professional accolades came late to George, possibly as a result of his wilful eschewing of the public arena. He was painfully self-effacing, although Dawber recalls George as 'an excellent conversationalist who, often in the mildest manner, would make an unexpectedly dry or whimsical comment'.¹⁶² Nevertheless, the fact that professional recognition was so long delayed, was a source of constant puzzlement and distress to his contemporaries.

George became an Associate of the RIBA in 1861, a Fellow in 1881, and finally agreed, in the late 1880s, to serve on the Council, after constant persuasion from Aston Webb, then Honorary Secretary. Webb recalled George as having said at once that it was not his line at all, and that Mr Peto was exactly the man we wanted, and that he would fill the office very much better.¹⁶³ George was awarded the Royal Gold Medal by the RIBA in 1896, and he became its President in 1908, serving through two sessions, November 1908-1909 (74th), and 1909 - July 1910 (75th).

Late recognition from the Royal Academy was very surprising, in view of George's having exhibited annually, almost without exception, from the early 1860s until the First World War. An Associate in 1910, he had to wait until 1917 to become a Full Academician. He was knighted in 1911, having been in the fuller glare of professional light as President of the RIBA.

In responding to the toast when assuming the Presidency, George was reported as saying that,

'those who had thrust this honour upon him were well aware that for half a century he had quietly done his work with enjoyment to himself, shirking all public duties and functions'.¹⁶⁴

For George's colleagues, his name stood for 'everything that was refined and good in English architecture'.¹⁶⁵ Aston Webb began his vote of thanks to George, after the latter's 'Opening Address' as President of the RIBA, in 1908,

'There is not, I am quite sure, a single person in this room who is not delighted and proud to see him (George) where he is. I cannot say he is there without some difficulty on our part, but there he is,

and we are very delighted and proud to see him there; emphatically the right man in the right place'. 166

George was certainly reluctant to enter professional debate and equally anxious never to criticise colleagues. While the latter was a quality greatly admired by his peers (Reginald Blomfield described him as 'one of the kindest and most humane men that ever lived' ¹⁶⁷), the former reluctance was possibly a source of some frustration to those involved in internecine debate. George's two 'Addresses' as President of the RIBA, ¹⁶⁸ were constructive and optimistic in tone, and above all, uncontentious. Blomfield, in his vote of thanks, was to remark 'it was characteristic of him that he found something to admire in nearly every manner that has been practised in architecture', ¹⁶⁹ tactfully continuing,

'I do not know that some of our purists would absolutely endorse that, but I think he was right; I think it is in this sympathy will all good work, and in this alertness and observance of all that is good in every method of architecture, that our best chance lies'. 170

While clearly seeking to appreciate and endorse the spirit of George's views, there is nevertheless the sense of Blomfield's having anticipated the impatience debatably felt by those searching for a more progressive lead. There was also a possible note of censure in Aston Webb's vote of thanks to George,

'You became a member of the Council and one of the strongest pillars of the Institute, which, since that date, has been through some troublous times; and although you have always kept a certain position of aloofness in the little troubles that have sometimes disturbed the surface of our peace - as they are apt to do in most societies - we have always known that we should have you on the side of what was right and of what was beautiful, and what you considered to be the best for the good of architecture'. 171

It would be unfair, however, to consider George naive, he appears on the contrary, to have been aware of the sometimes cynical and negative aspects of professional politics. In welcoming a change in the Institute's bye-laws, whereby the rotation of members of the

Council would be quickened, he remarked shrewdly,

'I observe that those who are not with us in our deliberations are marvellously critical about our conclusions. I would have these sharing our duties'. 172

Any hint of unpleasantness, however, was diffused in a characteristically generous way,

'I believe in youth, and had there been a contest for the post of President, I think my vote would have been for a vigorous young man'. 173

As President of the RIBA, George clearly felt duty bound to comment in his Addresses, on a wide range of contemporary matters of professional concern, but he occasionally revealed his own personal preoccupations. Aside from his work, these utterances are the only indications of what he believed to be 'best for the good of architecture'.¹⁷⁴

As might be expected, one of his abiding concerns was for the development of architectural education in Britain. The RIBA had enjoyed a Royal Charter for seventy-five years, and during George's term as President, it applied for a revised Charter, 'Its main object is to secure', reported George,

'that those practising architecture shall have gone through a proper training, having passed examinations as to their knowledge of building construction and studied the principles of design; but no examinations will guarantee that a man is an artist in his calling'. 175

The widely opposed Registration Bill of 1886, and the question 'Architecture - A Profession or an Art?'¹⁷⁶ which it served to raise, together with the attendant debate between the RIBA and the Memorialists have been widely discussed.¹⁷⁷ In September 1892, George wrote to the Journal of the Royal Insititute of British Architects, addressing the subject of 'The Institute and Architecture'.

'Sir, The experience gained in some years of pleasant association with various future practitioners leads me in no doubt about the value to the student of an intelligent examination. It lays down for him a useful course of study and give emulation and purpose to his work.

What would a University course be worth if even the best intentioned men went up for three years work with no defined standard to be reached, no boundaries to be passed or prizes to be taken?

If an examination is accepted, may we not consider that a distinction could be drawn between a 'design' intended to represent architecture and an executed work which may be 'architecture'? A student may be examined in design, as a test of his capacity to put ideas on paper, or, in other words to express himself grammatically. Confined to these lines there would be no examination in 'art' and the consistency in maintaining that the election of Fellows a general consensus of opinion on the quality of the candidates work should be sufficient.

The latter expression of opinion should be insisted upon and the Institute should relinquish the custom of admitting any respectable father of a family, however damnable his productions'. 178

Supporters of the RIBA were quick to appreciate the value of George's contribution,

'It is satisfactory to find that an architect like Mr Ernest George not only sees no bugbear in the idea of the examination of candidates but for the associateship in respect of their practical knowledge, but also recognises that a student may reasonably be examined in design . . . It is somewhat significant to have this important admission from Mr Ernest George, since it cannot possibly be pretended by the critics of the Institute, that he does not represent the artistic side of architecture, or that he is a mere surveyor desirous to see architecture treated as a business'. 179

George's usual reticence would have lent additional weight to his comments.

The debate over 'Profession or Art?' continued in the 1890s but it was realised, increasingly, that collaboration was necessary if standards were to improve. Registration was an issue to be deferred ultimately, for lack of urgency. Various steps were taken over the following years, however, which indicated that the argument, which at the outset had had an esoteric aspect centred around the wider issues of the role of the architect as designer, was now beginning to enjoy a more pragmatic interpretation. Indeed architectural and technical training became the subject of much consideration. Lethaby was appointed to Sidney Webb's new Technical Education Board at the LCC, and practical plans were made. In 1906 there followed Aston Webb's determined move to reconcile the RIBA

and lapsed memorialists, whereby the RIBA Board of Architectural Education was set up, their brief being to consider

'the various schemes of architectural education throughout the UK, to draw up and submit to the Council a uniform scheme of architectural education and to approach the recognised institutions of architectural training with a view to its general adoption'. 180

George, judged to have a valuable contribution to make, was appointed to the Board, which under the Chairmanship of Webb, included Belcher, Blomfield, Champneys, Guy Dawber, Alex Graham, Hare (representing the AA), Lethaby, Macartney, Prior, Ricardo, Pite, Prof. F.M. Simpson, John Slater and Stokes. The Architectural Review appreciated the sense of reality implicit in the move,

'we welcome the establishment of this Board as a step in the right direction and one that begins at the right end. Its labours are more likely to be effectual in the improvement of architecture in this country than such attempts at a short cut to status as the registration scheme'. 181

In 1908 George was able to report that the Committee had,

'done much towards bringing the various schools into touch and to some extent to a common system of teaching. We have not only the School of the Royal Academy, of the Architectural Association, and of South Kensington; the Universities have now their Chairs of Architecture, and the subject is being taught in the many technical and other schools throughout the country. This is a good sign and tends to show that the art is becoming a matter of general interest, where it had hitherto been much ignored'. 182

Given George's own views on the value of practical training and experience, his note of caution was not unexpected.

'Among the Universities Cambridge and Liverpool are giving a prominent place to Architecture among the subjects that may be taken for graduation, and this is certainly an advance. We most of us feel, however, that any degree should be given to a graduate as a student, and should distinguish him amongst architects while he is yet unpractised'. 183

George was also cognisant of the fact that, with increased facilities superseding the payment of a premium of several hundred guineas for four years of articles, there were many more recruits. As a result,

'We are now daily declining applications from those who seek a place in an office and work for their hands to do. Our annual competitions for prizes show how many there are who can make a good set of drawings. The quantity is all sufficient, and our effort must be to raise the quality and especially to give a helping hand to the prizemen of most promise'. 184

Registration was slow to come of age - it was introduced in 1931. 185
George also placed importance on the Study of Civic Design and Town Planning, which was gaining acceptance.

'Architectural effect is to be studied as well as convenience and economy . . . These matters have been till now left to surveyors and engineers',

but thanks to the Lever Chair in Town Planning at Liverpool University, 'the study of such important problems will in future be brought before our architectural students'. 186

A point of interest emerging from George's 'Address' of 1908 was his attitude towards new methods of construction, and their effect on style. He acknowledged that architects would be called upon to 'make a departure in design to meet modern construction in steel and concrete'. 187 The use of concrete, he remarked, had become a science,

'there is a Concrete Institute, and able men have made the finest calculations as to the work that may be done in concrete and ferro-concrete, with infinitesimal qualities .

We live in an age of hurry; ground-rents are heavy, and a great commercial building must be erected in one year instead of three; thus steel-framed construction will be taking the place of building'. 188

He cites as a contemporary example, 'a dry-goods store' in Oxford Street, clearly Selfridge's (first section 1907-09, whole block completed 1928, by Francis Swales, David Burnham, Frank Atkinson and J.J. Burnet); a building which was to particularly infuriate modernists since its clutter of a giant order, gargantuan sculpture and banal detailing, disguised the steel frame inside. George offered no specific criticism of Selfridge's but rather drew attention to the fact that,

'This iron framework is now being enclosed with a gigantic order of columns which bring it within the laws of the Building Act and give it the aspect of a Temple. The County Council have decided that next year we shall have a revised Act countenancing the thinness of walls that are sufficient for their load in the new material .

Many of our colleagues are already building in the new

method, erecting steel frames and filling in the spaces, the excuse being the saving of time. The buildings I have in my mind have been finished with architectural propriety, and the skeleton within is hidden and forgotten. But if this mode of construction becomes general, a style must be evolved adapted to it. It is not reasonable to make a show of stone walls, giving to the piers a comfortable width, when we know that the stone has no work to do. With our great adaptability, the eye and the mind may get accustomed to ferro-concrete posts and may credit them with their real strength. But shall we be satisfied without an apparent thickness and breadth of wall-space for light and shadow? I am not anxious to anticipate so violent a change, and I trust it will not come about till my work is done'. 189

At the age of sixty-nine, George showed himself to have a receptive, open mind, capable of acknowledging the need for progressive development, despite his personal aversion to violent change and the abandonment of traditional methods of construction.

George's primary concern in the public and professional arenas, appears to have been for education. He felt keenly that 'fine' architecture is the least selfish or 'classy of human products: it is for all sorts and conditions of men'.¹⁹⁰ The RIBA he felt, had an important responsibility to 'interest the outside world in our Art', but must also strive to give 'a higher organisation to the Profession of Architecture'.¹⁹¹ Their new Charter gained Royal sanction and the new bye-laws were awaiting approval in November 1909. It was hoped that by early 1910, they would have the powers

'to open the gates of the Institute for the space of one year for the admission of the large number of practising architects of good standing who are still unattached to our body. When that has been done with success we may claim that we represent practically the whole of the architectural profession in this country; we are then to ask Parliament for higher powers and a more secure position. 192

George was well-respected as President of the RIBA; his views were moderate, but firmly held.

Home Life

Little is known of George's private life, since he talked infrequently about such matters, but from the comments made by his professional associates there is nothing to suggest that the professional person differed in any way from the private individual.

In 1866, George married Mary Allan Burn, daughter of Robert Burn of Epsom. They had seven children, four sons, Ernest Stuart (b.1868), Cecil D. (b.1869), Wilfred (b.1872), Allan (b.1875) and three daughters, Ethel A. (b.1871), Cecily (b.1876) and Margaret Burn (b.1877). Four of his children, Stuart, Allan, Cecily and Margaret survived him. He had two grandchildren, Graham, son of his widowed daughter-in-law May Helen, and Eileen, daughter of Stuart and Georgina.

Ernest and Mary George lived at 1 Grecian Cottages, Lower Norwood after their marriage, but George was left a widower in 1877. In 1887, he moved to Redroofs, the house that he had built for himself on Streatham Common (see Chapter 5), where his sister Mary acted as housekeeper and cared for his young children. In 1903, he moved to 36 Lancaster Gate, London and in 1914, to 6 Inverness Terrace, Hyde Park. In 1921 he was living at 71 Palace Court, Bayswater, and in that year he described himself as 'having retired a year ago'.¹⁹³ It is somewhat appropriate that one of his last published designs should have been for a war memorial, to be erected by the Duke of Portland on his Caithness estate. ^(Pl.447) in memory of those of the locality who fell or fought in the war,¹⁹⁴ since the end of the war marked the conclusion of the era to which George had manifestly belonged.

Dawber recalled,

'He had lived his life, had done his work conscientiously and well. His was the kindest nature, modest, simple, and unassuming, absolutely reliable and the soul of integrity, and all who knew him will miss his pleasant smile, the look of his keen blue eyes and cheery greeting. 195

George died on 15 December 1922, and his funeral, conducted by his son-in-law, Canon C.H. Robinson, took place on 18 December. Dawber remarked,

'It was fitting that his funeral should take place in the little chapel of the Golders Green Crematorium, one of his most successful designs in brickwork; and Beethoven's great funeral march 'On the Death of a Hero', taken from the Sonata Op.26, was unusually appropriate as a tribute to a man, who, in a lifetime of 83 years, had worked heroically and unremittingly for the good of his art and for bringing higher values into the lives of his contemporaries and successors'. 196

Those in attendance included Sir Aston Webb, Sir Luke Fildes, Sir George Frampton, Sir John Burnet, Sir Isadore Spielmann, Sir Alfred

Brumwell Thomas, Collicut, Macartney, Dawber, Caröe, Wigglesworth,
Ricardo, John W.Simpson, Colonel Raymond, Andrew Prentice,
E.P.Thompson, Louis Ambler, T.Blake Wirgman, W.A.Pite, Herbert Read,
Arthur Keen, F.R.Yerbury, Major Corlette, Charles L.Hartwell,
M.Condan, W.W.Scott-Moncrieff as well as Harold Peto and Alfred
Yeates.¹⁹⁷

An examination of the architecture of Sir Ernest George from C.1860 until C.1922, reveals his most successful period to have been that between 1876 and 1892, in partnership with Harold Peto. Furthermore it reveals that his domestic designs were spectacularly more successful than those for public buildings and schemes. His intuitively artistic appreciation for the picturesque, rather than the monumental, evinced in his watercolour painting, etching and architectural perspectives, must to some degree, account for this difference in quality. He also professed an unashamed preference for domestic work,

'To those of us who deal little with Public buildings it is no mean thing to build Homes about the country, if our endeavours secure that they are well built, pleasant to live in, and comely'. 1

It has proved tempting to commentators on George's work, to see him as the last of a breed of architectural draughtsmen, who placed pictorial values as paramount. This view was certainly held by some of his pupils. Braddell, for example, argued,

'Put briefly, my master's approach to architecture was largely a pictorial one. He was a marvellously facile and accomplished water-colour artist; he could draw in any medium far more easily than most men can talk; he was immensely versed in all the many dresses buildings could assume and he never had the least difficulty in getting them right; he had admirable taste and feeling. Where he failed in my judgment, was that he never made a study of a building as something involving the creation of a perfect organic whole. As an example of this, where a normally equipped man would begin by working on a plan and section, George would make his start with a brilliant water-colour perspective! He would seem to say, 'There you are, that is the kind of building which would look very well there. What more can you ask?' ' 2

Braddell's assessment raises some important points. Firstly, it is inaccurate, since evidence shows George to have considered plan before elevation on several occasions, for example the house for Charles Rose (see Chapter 4); Poles (see Chapter 5); Crathorne Hall (see Chapter 7). Secondly, George was sixty-three when Braddell entered the office, and his innate facility for designing, developed with age and experience merely served to disguise the thoroughness of his working methods, as indicated in examples discussed in Chapters 5 and 7.

Braddell argued,

'George was not in any sense an intellectual artist, but an intuitive one, keenly sensitive to the pictorial, the scenic side of architecture. Gifted as he was with all the qualities of a brilliant draughtsman and water-colour artist, able to transfer to paper with the utmost sureness and rapidity, the first transient idea of a design, he never felt the necessity for looking deeply into any problem set before him. This almost certainly explains his lack of success when he attempted, as he occasionally did, the larger forms of monumental architecture'. 3

However, he continued,

'Although he cannot be said to have been truly a great architect, he was in fact a first-class designer of houses. He always built well and planned well, and he understood the mechanism of life as it was lived in great households. He had no confessed 'credo' but was content to adapt for usage of his own time the architectural scenery of the past, with illustrations of which he had filled so many sketch-books'. 4

Braddell's assessment of George must be considered within the context of architectural thinking on the 1920s, a time when architectural schools had supplanted the old English system of articulated pupillage, a time when fashions and tastes had in some respects changed in favour of the monumental. Dawber, however, himself largely concerned with domestic work, was swift to acknowledge George as a superlative domestic architect. There is no doubt that one of George's most important strengths lay in his intuitive command of domestic requirements,

'He was an able and brilliant planner, and the ease with which his buildings grouped together in the particularly picturesque manner he made his own never ceased to excite our keen appreciation. His buildings were thoroughly English in construction, planning and general design, though sometimes in detail and feeling they showed foreign influence...

In the arrangement of his houses he was eminently practical, and though he rather prided himself on not being the business man, yet no one understood or grasped the requirements of a building better than he did.

His houses invariably possess a sense of home, a subtle charm of his own always pervaded his work; nothing was hurried or slurred, every little detail or point was threshed out and considered with infinite care and thought. They seemed always to fit the site, to grow out of the ground, and his great artistic sense enabled him to see them as a completed whole, whilst he was planning them'. 5

Furthermore, George's style of perspective drawing, already discussed, was eminently suited to show these qualities to their best

advantage, The perspective was itself, a product of a fine tradition in English drawing and painting ⁶ and as such was the perfect vehicle for expressing those very qualities which distinguished the character of English buildings of the Domestic Revival and which formed an authentic part of George's work, namely, a concern for texture, colour, scale and detail, and for the character of the site and place. The perspective was the perfect medium for generating a sense of the Romantic and the picturesque. George's skill as an artist emphasised these pictorial visual qualities and he was quick to recognise the value of this ability in exhibition and publication. Vaughan was reputed to be a fine draughtsman and Yeates an accomplished watercolourist, but George ensured that he executed all the designs, personally - an arrangement, it must be said, which clearly suited his successive partners, since it was so successful. On the one hand the perspectives were a means to an end, in George's case they were works of art in themselves, and as such, by implication, drew attention away from his undeniable skills in the construction and planning of buildings.

The 1880s was a period which valued qualities of variety and vigour in design, both of which George was well able to provide, not only because he was prepared to work in a variety of styles, but also because his artistic sense alerted him to the potential of colour in his buildings, witnessed by his imaginative use of terra-cotta in the Harrington and Collingham Gardens developments, and in the wide variety of examples discussed in Chapter 4. As Adshead was to remark of George,

'He was the only man who could successfully use terra-cotta. He was a great colourist, and his building at the corner of Albemarle Street, the Albemarle Hotel, testifies to this'. ⁷

The 1880s also witnessed some of the finest expressions of architectural drawing, which enjoyed great popularity. George excelled on both counts, in providing variety and liveliness, and in presenting these qualities in a stylish and evocative way. This undoubtedly contributed towards his great success during his period in partnership with Harold Peto.

While at first sight many of George's designs might appear elaborate, there is always an underlying breadth of treatment and grasp of composition in his manipulation of masses and planes. From a very early

stage in his development, George showed a command of massing and composition, which is always present in his designs, however stylish and elaborate the overlaid detail. Indeed there is a certain restraint, which is an authentic part of George's architecture, but which often escapes remark. This restraint was occasionally laid bare, for example, in some works of the late 1880s, where the designs relied for their effect, upon proportion, massing and very spare detail. In such instances, the effect was often further encouraged by the use of relatively simple devices, such as string courses. Plain masonry, simple mouldings and openings, often focussed attention on the material solidity of the houses, and on the quality of masonry or stonework and the general level of workmanship. Such effects were particularly successful in cases where George was working within a local vernacular tradition. Unlike Shaw, who engendered movement and tension into his country house designs, by the deployment of gables, chimneys, bays and wings, George's work betrays a taste for static massing; the height and direction of the wings, bays and roofs do not challenge one another in his designs, but instead are related so as to complement the composition. In some of his early country and town house designs, this simplicity was to some extent overlaid by picturesque detail. It is important to acknowledge therefore, that while George's was an artistic approach, he always recognised the importance of proportion, massing and composition, and all his work was founded in a thorough understanding of building principles, materials and craftsmanship. Such concerns constantly disciplined his picturesque talent and prevented his designs from degenerating into the quaint and fussy.

George's work was not stylistically innovative, but as Dawber pointed out, all George's perspectives, bore witness to his great versatility of design, for although all show his own individuality and character, yet there was never any repetition of idea'.⁸ George was prepared to justify this variety on a number of grounds. Firstly the preference of the client,

'Whatever harmony may be arrived at in the rebuilding of our towns, there will remain a diversity in the treatment of the country house. A house in its park may, without making a false note, express the individualities of its owner. While to one the dignity of columned portico, classic proportion, and breadth of treatment appeal another, in whom the romantic element is strong, finds formality chilling; he will be happier in panelled rooms with their long mullioned windows. There will still be Horace Walpoles and Walter Scotts as well as Greek revivalists'.⁹

One of George's strengths, and one which he instilled in his pupils, was his ability and willingness to satisfy such stylistic preferences, although always in his individual manner. Furthermore, this stylistic ambidexterity was never at the expense of quality of design. He was well able to embody all his concerns for design, planning, siting and craftsmanship in a variety of styles.

Secondly, it was George's firmly held belief that a sound understanding of the strengths of past architecture was the only basis for originality,

'Various types may be taken in starting the lines of a really modern house, avoiding both pedantry and mediaevalism, I speak of types, for I believe that when the utmost originality is intended, there is, consciously or unconsciously, a reminiscence of something that has been before and that has left its influence with us'. 10

The contemporary vagaries of style, he contended, could not, and should not supplant the importance of 'Tradition,' which still has,

'its stronghold; the love for the time-honoured buildings, the associations with them, their texture and mellowness, instinctively appeal to us'. 11

Belief that George and Peto 'filled the gap in the procession of architects between the greater Norman Shaw and Edwin Lutyens¹² is not only to undervalue the quality of his work, but also denies George's importance to late nineteenth and early twentieth century domestic architecture. It was from the eclectic work of architects like Shaw, Jackson and George, that the following generation sought a new, more original direction, an approach which George must surely have endorsed.

Although George was not a convinced vernacular revivalist, it was those of his houses which showed an informed and sympathetic handling of forms based on local architectural and building traditions which were to be the most influential in Arts and Crafts circles. Somewhat surprisingly, Lutyens argued, that 'location mattered little' to George, 'and no provincial formation influenced him for at that time terra-cotta was the last word in building'.¹³ George's work in the Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire and Kent vernacular traditions in particular make nonsense of this comment. Furthermore, George demonstrated a concern for location even when working outside English

vernacular traditions, in Switzerland for example. His concern for location in all cases, is supported by the fact that he often employed local builders, All this evidence denies the truth of Lutyens's comment, which was in itself ungenerous, in view of the undeniable influence that George's work in the Surrey vernacular in particular, had on Lutyens's own early work (see Chapter 9).

Also influential were George's concerns for craftsmanship, detail, siting and quality of materials and design, not only in architecture, but also in interior and garden design. Concerns shared in great measure by Harold Peto in particular.

George's concerns for craftsmanship stemmed, not from firmly held Arts and Crafts principles, but rather from an intuitive, unselfconscious desire for excellence, this suggesting that the Arts and Crafts Movement's proprietorial attitude towards craftsmanship was not entirely tenable. George was quite prepared to combine genuine examples of early furniture and applied design, such as leatherwork and panelling, with examples of contemporary craftsmanship. A concern for quality is evident throughout the whole range of George's work, since, wherever possible, he avoided any sense of hierarchy in his designing. The same quality of materials and levels of embellishment achieved in larger houses were introduced wherever possible in cottage and lodge designs. Furthermore, where economy dictated, the use of simple materials, George's command of grouping and composition always allowed him to design very effectively. Indeed many of his smaller house designs proved to be the most influential in view of the course that the English Domestic Revival was to take in the early part of the twentieth century, in placing emphasis on smaller housing types.

George's powers of judgment it has been seen extended to interior schemes, which relied equally upon a sense of proportion, sequence and refinement. As was the case with his architectural designs, George's furniture designs show a high level of scholarship and historical expertise, combined with a desire on his part to make them structurally stable.

An examination of the pattern of patronage in George's work indicates that, although by 1875, the year of Thomas Vaughan's death, the partnership was establishing itself and showing promise, the role played by the Peto family cannot be overestimated. Many important and

timely commissions plainly came to George through Harold Peto and his family. By 1892, the year of Peto's retirement, George's reputation was so well established that Alfred Yeates appears to have exerted little influence in securing clients.

In the organisation of the office, and of his own working methods, although undoubtedly self-effacing, George nevertheless showed perspicacity in acknowledging where his own strengths, and those of his partners lay and furthermore in ensuring that he created a working environment which allowed those qualities to best develop, and serve the partnership.

Professor Aichison commented that George's 'practical motto' was 'deeds not words'.¹⁴ Indeed, the sheer consistency with which he produced, exhibited, published and executed designs of high quality ensured that his work reached a wide audience. George did not have to rely upon promulgating a particular theoretical position, he instead taught and influenced by example. Therein lay his particular contribution to the development of English domestic architecture.

After George's death in December 1922, Paul Waterhouse, architect and former pupil said,

'If ever the word gentleman meant a man of perfect gentleness, that man was the late Sir Ernest George. In his passing away many of us here have lost an inspiring master. Some were actually his pupils, others were followers of his works in the sense that men of his artistic strength compel the homage of sympathy; others again, including most of his contemporaries and a great multitude of his juniors, have known, felt and loved the personal character which was so deeply expressed in the character of his work. In few men has the personality been so close to the expression in architecture; and it is this close union of the artist's own spirit with the spirit of his achievements in building craft which makes me speak of the gentleness which infused both. He was a great pioneer and a pioneer of the right kind. No man of his epoch was more filled with the obligations of truth to tradition. Yet no man filled this obedience to the part with a more conspicuously personal motive'.¹⁵

It was perhaps in an effort to retrieve these qualities for architecture, that Philip Johnson exhorted his audience at the RIBA in 1979, to 'build in the spirit of Ernest George'.¹⁶